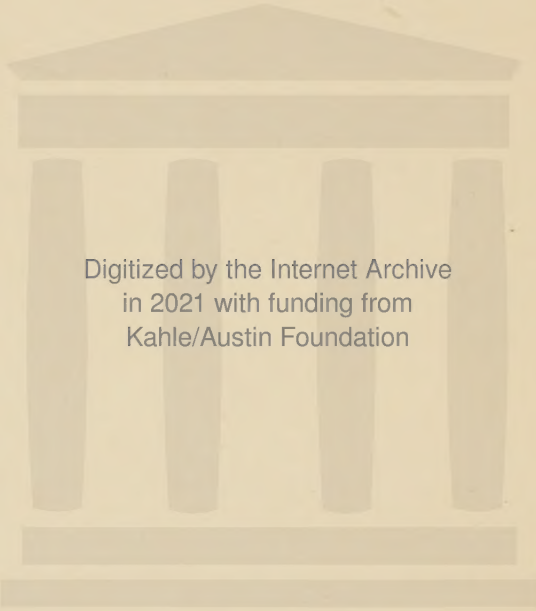


*Through the Bible
Day by Day*

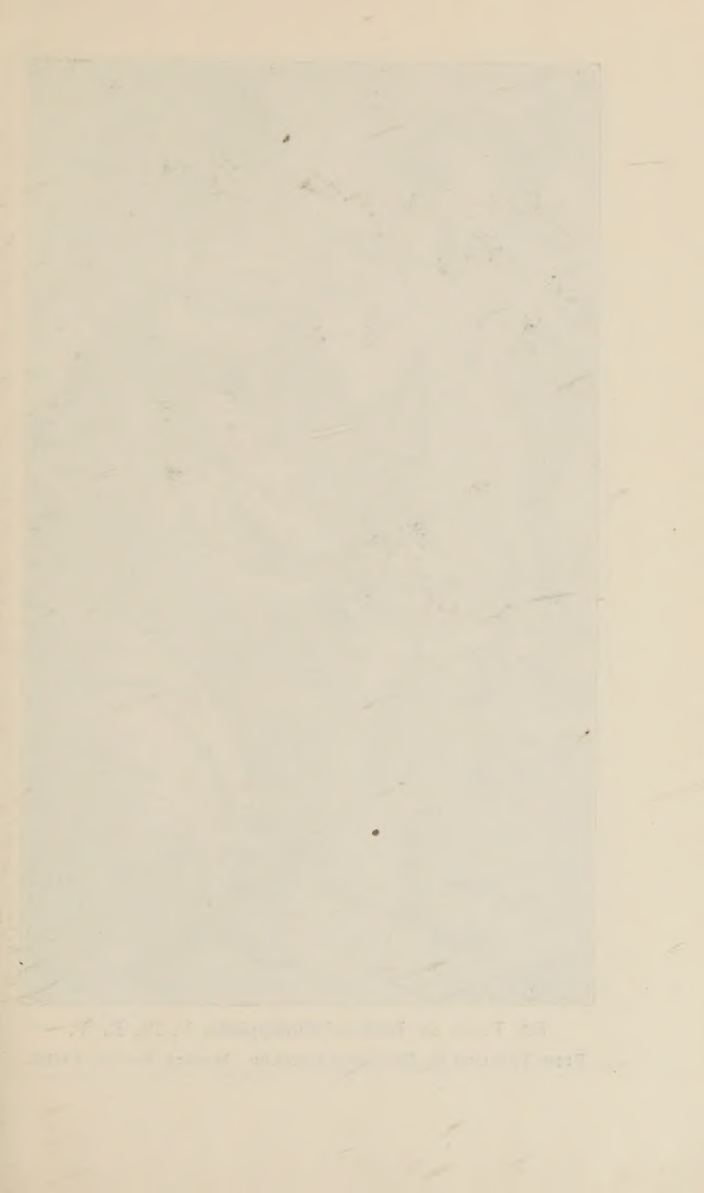
A DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY

F.B. Meyer



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ST. PAUL AT ROME. Philippians 1: 13, R. V.
From Painting by FREDERIC SHIELDS. Modern British Artist.

Through the Bible Day by Day

A Devotional Commentary

BY

REV. F. B. MEYER

Arranged for Daily Reading, with Book Introductions,
Outlines and Review Questions

Illustrated from Paintings by Modern Artists

VOLUME VII

PHILIPPIANS TO REVELATION

PHILADELPHIA
AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION
1816 Chestnut Street

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Printed in the U.S.A.

INTRODUCTION

THERE is need everywhere for the cultivation of the habit of reading some portion of God's Word *each day*. Such reading should be *consecutive*, for only thus can continuous interest be maintained. It may also be greatly helped by an *interpreter*, who will explain what is obscure as well as suggest applications of the message to the daily life.

To meet such need this series of seven volumes provides an arrangement of the books of the Bible in daily portions, with concise devotional comments. It includes all portions of the Bible most suitable for daily reading, either individually or in family groups.

As a *commentary on the whole Bible*, these volumes will be found valuable because they omit points of merely scholarly interest and fix attention upon the central message of each passage and its application to daily needs. There are frequent references to other parts of Scripture, especially from Old Testament truths to their New Testament fulfilment and interpretation.

Mr. Meyer's life-long experience in interpreting the Bible to the common people makes him pre-eminently fitted for this service—a crowning one in his world-wide ministry by voice and pen.

Introductions and outlines are provided for each Bible book. Review questions have been added at appropriate points, to enable readers to sum up and better preserve in memory what they have learned. The illustrations, selected from paintings of Bible scenes by modern artists, aid in the interpretation of the passages which they portray.

It is hoped that these volumes will prove of much value to Sunday-school teachers and adult scholars; will promote profitable Bible reading in connection with both family and private devotions; and will everywhere deepen a love for and an intelligent acquaintance with the one Book which can provide a fresh and helpful message for the needs of each new day.

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DAILY READING OF GOD'S WORD

The Bible is full of God's wisdom. It is the Word of God. We must read it not only with our head, but with our heart. An analysis of its contents is good and desirable; but when all this is done, we need to allow time for the inner wisdom, power and grace which are stored in the Book, to soak into our inner consciousness. Therefore, for some reasons, it is better to have a shorter portion for daily study, to give us time to get all the juice and marrow out of what we read.

This is the method followed in this system. Busy people, students, commercial men, Sunday-school workers and older scholars, soldiers and sailors, people on the hills and on the prairies, living on the edge of the great tides of human activity, will find these passages, selected for daily reading, ample to furnish a daily meal of truth, and yet deep and wide enough for profound inquiry and interest.

It has always seemed to me that the true way to know the Bible is to read it through. It is only so that we can follow the unveiling of the divine purpose, from the Dawn of Genesis to the Perfect Day of the divine writings of John. It is only so that we can obtain a connected view of the wide scope of Revelation. To read in different, unconnected passages, now of Poetry, now of History, now of Doctrine, prevents the mind from getting proper focus. We are apt by that method to concentrate on a few familiar passages, instead of listening to all that God has spoken to men's hearts. There is, probably, nothing more vital to an accurate knowledge of the Bible than the good

old practice of reading it thoughtfully and steadily through with such brief notes as this volume provides.

But let it always be remembered that the profoundest knowledge of the Word comes from the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit. Ask him to unlock and unfold its sacred mysteries. Ask him to reveal the glories of our Lord in every chapter. Ask him to enable you to "read, mark, learn and inwardly digest." Ask him, finally, to enable you to become not a forgetful hearer or reader, but a doer of the Word. See to it that your reading is combined with the faith that claims of God the fulfilment, in your own experience, of all he has promised. No prayer, therefore, is more salutary, as you open your Bible, morning by morning, than the familiar old words of the psalmist: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

F. B. MEYER.



THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

TO PRESENT EVERY MAN PERFECT IN CHRIST.

SALUTATION1:1, 2.

I. A PASTOR'S REGARD AND CONCERN FOR
HIS PEOPLE1:3-11.

1. *Thanksgiving for Their Co-operation*1:3-5.
2. *Confidence That They Share the Same Grace*1:6, 7.
3. *Prayer for Their Spiritual Enrichment*1:8-11.

II. 'THE COMPENSATIONS OF PAUL'S IM-
PRISONMENT1:12-26.

1. *Testimony of His Bonds Throughout the Praetorian Guard*1:12, 13.
2. *Increased Boldness of the Brotherhood in Preaching Christ*1:14-18.
3. *His Hope of Larger Usefulness upon His Release*1:19-26.

III. THE LIFE THAT IS WORTHY OF THE
GOSPEL OF CHRIST1:27—2:30.

1. *A Life of Courage in the Face of Conflict*1:27-30.
2. *A Life of Good-Will and Helpfulness*2:1-5.
3. *A Life Determined by the Spirit of Christ*2:6-11.
4. *A Life Triumphant in an Evil World*2:12-18.

(*Illustrated by Paul's Fellow-Workers* 2:19-30.

1. *Timothy*2:19-24.
2. *Epaphroditus*2:25-30.)

IV. HUMAN AND DIVINE RIGHTEOUSNESS

CONTRASTED3:1—4:3.

1. *Warning against Those Who Glory
in the Flesh*3:1-3.
 2. *Paul's Personal Claim to Legal
Righteousness*3:4-6.
 3. *His Repudiation of All Else for the
Righteousness of Christ*3:7-16.
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Minded*3:17—4:1
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teche*4:2, 3.)

V. THE FINAL EXHORTATION4:4-9.

1. *The Place of Prayer*4:4-7.
2. *The Need of Purity*4:8, 9.

VI. A PERSONAL MESSAGE4:10-19.

1. *The Gift from the Philippians*4:10-14.
2. *Their Past Assistance*4:15-17.
3. *The Divine Acceptance of This Ser-
vice*4:18, 19.

CONCLUSION4:20-23.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

The Church at Philippi appears to have been one of the purest of the Apostolic age, and beyond any other called out the Apostle's thankfulness and commendation.

The occasion of the Epistle seems to have been the return of Epaphroditus, who had brought a gift from Paul's friends in Philippi, but had been seized by a dangerous illness. Paul was a prisoner in his own hired house in Rome and was anticipating his trial before the emperor.

There is nothing controversial in this letter. The peace of God keeps the Apostle's mind and heart, and out of it pours a tide of deep and tender love. The hope of being alive at Christ's coming is still his guiding star. His citizenship is in heaven, and all that he has forfeited of earthly wealth and joy is more than compensated for by what he has found in Christ.

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

1. Rejoice in Growth; and Seek Increase.

Philippians 1:1-11. It is exceedingly difficult to compress this Epistle, which is the tenderest and most personal of them all. Every word merits consideration; every paragraph is full of linked sweetness long drawn out. In the opening verses we are taught that we may further the gospel, not only by direct efforts, but by helping those who, like the Apostle, are devoted to its spread. From the early beginnings of their friendship, this Church had never faltered in its loving gifts, which Paul sought to repay with prayers on their behalf. He regarded them as comrades fighting the same enemy, on the same field, and sharing in the same grace.

The Apostle's confidence that whatever God begins will have its perfect end, v. 6, is very reassuring. This is what we need, though we must not take it for granted apart from faith and prayer. Each of the Epistles has its "collect," its comprehensive prayer offered in the name of Christ. This one is especially beautiful. Abounding love will lead to increased knowledge; and this to quicker discrimination between things that differ, however similar they may appear; and this, in turn, to freedom from blame and offense. And all will result in the fruit of a holy life, pleasing to Jesus and bringing glory and praise to God.

2. "To Live Is Christ, and To Die Is Gain."

Philippians 1:12-21. It was a matter of comparative indifference to Paul what happened to himself so long as the gospel progressed, because the extension of the gospel meant the growing glory of Jesus. He was quite content to be in bonds, if only by his chains he might gain access to new realms, hitherto untrodden, for proclaiming his Lord. He could even view

with equanimity the envy and strife of some, if Jesus might be named to those who had never heard of him. He was prepared to live or to die, that Jesus might be magnified. He was willing to remain for a little longer outside of heaven, if that would better serve the cause he loved. His main argument for consistency of life on the part of his converts was that the success of the gospel might not be impeded. It seemed good to suffer, if only it were on the behalf of Christ. Oh that we might experience a similar absorption in the great interests of the gospel!

It is clear from this paragraph that death is not an unconscious sleep. It is gain. It is a loosing from anchorage so that the soul may go forth on the broad ocean of God's love. It does not interrupt our conscious fellowship with the Lord. The moment of absence here is the moment of presence there. To die is therefore *gain*.

3. Privileged To Suffer in Christ's Behalf.

Philippians 1:22-30. Our "manner of life" is all-important. In the open day and in the hours of darkness it must be worthy of the gospel. We must show ourselves to be of a heavenly tone and temper, as citizens of that "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Lady Powerscourt used to say that she dwelt in heaven, but came down for a few hours each day to do her work on earth, returning home at night. Clearly, then, our dress, accent, and behavior should betray us as strangers and pilgrims who can well endure the discomfort of the inn or the troublous experiences of the place of our sojourn.

Notice that remarkable expression, *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ . . . to suffer*, v. 29. This is an added honor conferred on us by our Lord. The King gives us the opportunity of lying in the stocks with him, of standing at the same pillory, and of being crucified on the same Calvary. But those who have drunk of his cup shall share his throne. When

earth and heaven shall pass away, his fellow-sufferers shall be his chosen body-guard and attendants in a world where all shall love and honor him.

4. Following His Example of Self-Surrender.

Philippians 2:1-11. In all Scripture—indeed, in all literature—there is no passage which combines such extraordinary extremes as this. The Apostle opens the golden compasses of his faith, placing one jeweled point on the throne of divine glory and the other at the edge of the pit, where the Cross stood; and then he asks us to measure the vast descent of the Son of God as he came down to help us. Mark the seven steps: He was in the form of God, that is, as much God as he was afterward a servant; *being in the form of God . . . took the form of a servant*. He was certainly the latter and equally so the former. He did not grasp at equality with God, for it was already his. He emptied himself, that is, refused to avail himself of the use of his divine attributes, that he might teach the meaning of absolute dependence on the Father. He obeyed as a servant the laws which had their source in himself. He became man—a humble man, a dying man, a crucified man. He lay in the grave. But the meaning of his descent was that of his ascent, and to all his illustrious names is now added that of *Jesus—Saviour*. This must be our model. This mind must be in us. In proportion as we become humbled and crucified, we, in our small measure, shall attain the power of blessing and saving men.

5. Lights in the World.

Philippians 2:12-18. The sublime visions of the Apostle of the glory of the divine Redeemer are always linked with practical exhortation. Do nothing through pride and vainglory. Look on the things of others. Count others better than yourself. Work out what God is working in. Your heart is God's workshop! His Spirit is there, striving against selfishness, pride, im-

purity, and vanity, but you must consolidate each holy impulse in speech and act. Be careful of every such movement in your soul; it will become clearer and more definite as you yield to it, and it will be corroborated by outward circumstances, which God will open before you. But exercise fear and trembling, just as the young pupil of a great master will be nervously careful not to lose one thought or suggestion which he may impart.

In this manner you will become as a lighthouse on a rockbound coast, shining with blameless and beneficent beauty among your companions. Light is silent, but it reveals. Light is gentle, but it is mighty in its effects. Light departs when the sun is down, but it may be maintained by various luminaries until dawn again breaks. As we shine, we shall be consumed, but the sacrifice will not be in vain.

6. Honoring Christian Messengers.

Philippians 2:19-30. The Apostle nobly honored the younger men who wrought with him. He speaks of Timothy as *his son*, and expatiates on the genuineness of his loving interest in each of his converts. He describes Epaphroditus as his *brother, fellow-worker, and fellow-soldier*. How tenderly he refers to his sickness and recovery, as though God had conferred on himself special favor in giving back this beloved comrade in the great fight!

It is well worth while to ponder the remark that God does not add sorrow to sorrow, v. 27. He tempers his wind to the shorn lamb. He cautions the accuser that he must not take Job's life. With the trial he makes the way of escape. He keeps his finger on the wrist while the operation is in progress, and stays it as soon as the pulse flutters. Not sorrow upon sorrow! Note also that "hazarding" of life, v. 30, R.V. It was a common experience in those great days of Christ's suffering Church, Acts 15:26. How strange it is today to watch the sacrifices that men and women will make

in times of war, when a new spirit is stirring in the world and men adventure everything for liberty, righteousness, and fatherland, and then compare this extravagant expenditure of blood and treasure with what we have done for Jesus.

7. Losing All To Know Christ.

Philippians 3:1-12. Precept must be on precept, line on line. The false teachers who dogged Paul's steps insisted on rigid conformity to Judaism, with its rabbinical accretions, as the condition of being saved by Christ. Paul's answer was that he had gone through all the requirements of Judaism, but had found it absolutely unsatisfactory and inefficient to subdue the sin of his soul. But in Christ he had found everything he needed. What had been gain to him now seemed but dross. He had found the pearl of great price, and was only too glad to sacrifice all else to purchase and keep it, as the talisman of complete victory.

The *essence* of Judaism was not external but within. True circumcision was deliverance from the self-life, and that could only be gained by the Cross of Christ. The "Israelite indeed," like Nathanael, had three traits of character—his worship was spiritual, he gloried in the Crucified, and he was delivered from reliance upon the self-life. Let us ask the Holy Spirit to teach us to know Jesus in the intimacy of personal fellowship, to feel the pulse of his resurrection life, to experience the power of his death, and to realize the whole of his divine program. For this we might be more than content to trample on our boasted pride.

8. Pressing on "unto the Prize."

Philippians 3:13-21. The nearer the saint comes to the perfect life, the farther he feels from it. It is only when we have climbed the foothills that we realize how lofty the mountain summits are. But there is no need for discouragement. We have eternity before us, the

expanding landscape of truth is our inspiration, and the loving Spirit of God bears us upward on eagle's wings. Our Saviour had a distinct purpose in view when he apprehended us. Its full scope was only known to him; let us strive that we may not fail to realize his ideal. We can do this best by forgetting past failures, past sins, and past successes, and pressing on toward the goal. Will not the prize be the Lord himself? Let us always remember that God's call is *upward*. This will help us when there seems collision between two duties.

Instead of judging another, let us walk together along the path of obedience. Those who leave the narrow track and still profess godliness are greater enemies to the Cross than avowed antagonists. We are citizens of the skies, who come forth to spend a few hours each day on earth. This is our inn, yonder is our true home. Thence Jesus will come to complete the work of salvation by giving us a body like his own.

9. Inspiring Exhortations.

Philippians 4:1-9. What a strong and faithful heart was Paul's! Poor and despised though he was, he had both joys and crowns of which no hostile force could deprive him. He lived in the encompassing atmosphere of eternity, as we may. Surely these two Christian women could not have withstood this tender exhortation; and all his fellow-workers must have been heartened by the thought that their names were dear to Christ, and entered in the birthday book of the twice-born.

Joy and peace are the subjects of the next paragraph. How wonderful that these struggling little churches were drinking of springs of which the princes and citizens of Greece and Rome knew nothing. Note the conditions. We must be moderate in our ambitions and gentle in our behavior. We must ever practice the presence of our Lord—he is always at hand. We must turn over **all** causes of anxiety to the Father's

infinite care and leave them with him. We must thank him for the past, and count on him for the future. While we pray, the Angel of Peace will descend to stand as sentry at our heart's door. But we must possess the God of peace as well as the peace of God—the one condition being that we must earnestly pursue all things that are true, just, pure, and lovely.

10. "My God Shall Supply Every Need."

Philippians 4:10-23. The Apostle had been glad to receive the gifts of his friends, because these evidenced their earnest religious life. It was fruit that increased to their account. On his own part he had learned one of the greatest of lessons—contentment with whatever state he found himself in. This is a secret that can only be acquired by our experience of life in the will of God. When once the soul lives in God and finds its highest ideal in the fulfillment of his will, it becomes absolutely assured that all things which are necessary will be added. All things are possible to those who derive their daily strength from God.

It is wonderful to hear Paul say that he abounded, v. 18. A prison, a chain, a meager existence! The great ones of the world would have ridiculed the idea that any could be said to abound in such conditions. But they could not imagine the other hemisphere in which Paul lived; and out of his own blessed experience of what Christ could do, he promised that one's every need would be supplied. God's measure is his riches in glory; and his channel is Jesus Christ. Let us learn from v. 18 that every gift to God's children which is given from a pure motive is acceptable to him as a fragrant sacrifice. That reference in v. 22 shows that Paul was making good use of his stay in Rome!

(For Review Questions see next page.)

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

OUTLINE.

- (a) What is the chief thought which Paul develops in this Epistle?
- (b) What sort of life is worthy of the gospel of Christ?

INTRODUCTION.

- (c) Where was this letter written?
- (d) What was its occasion?
- (e) What distinguishes it among the group of Pauline Epistles?

SECTIONS 1-10. CHAPTERS 1-4.

(Each question applies to the paragraph of corresponding number in the Comments.)

1. What great confidence did Paul have concerning the Philippian converts?
2. How had the Apostle's imprisonment fallen out to the furtherance of the gospel?
3. What news did he hope to hear regarding the Philip-pians?
4. What is the great characteristic of the "mind of Christ"?
5. What is the Christian's relation to the world?
6. How was Timothy distinguished from Paul's other helpers? What is said about Epaphroditus?
7. Why did Paul count as loss everything that had been gain to him?
8. What should we ever seek to apprehend?
9. What objects should engage our thoughts?
10. What great lesson had Paul learned? With what promise does the Epistle close?

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

“CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY.”

SALUTATION1:1, 2.

I. THE FAITH AND THE EXPERIENCE OF THE COLOSSIANS1:3—2:5.

1. *Thanksgiving for the Faith of the Colossians*1:3-7.
2. *Prayer for Their Growth in Knowledge and Grace*1:8-11.
3. *The Pre-eminence of Christ*.....1:12-20.
4. *The Experience of Redemption*....1:21-23.
5. *The Ministry of Redemption*.....1:24—2:5.

II. THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF THE CHRISTIAN2:6—4:8.

1. *False Philosophies To Be Rejected* 2:6-15.
2. *False Practices To Be Avoided*...2:16-23.
3. *The Risen Life and the Old Life in Contrast*3:1-4.
4. *The Scope of Christian Obligation* 3:5—4:6.
5. *Personal Matters*4:7-17.

CONCLUSION4:18.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Colosse was an important city in Asia Minor, not far from Laodicea and Hierapolis. The church there had been planted by Epaphras, perhaps during Paul's residence at Ephesus. The Apostle, apparently, had not visited it himself, 2:1, but was deeply interested in it through the report of his friend.

This Epistle was written during Paul's imprisonment at Rome, 1:24; 4:18, and apparently about the same time as those to the Ephesians and Philemon; for the three letters were sent by the hands of the same persons, Tychicus and Onesimus, 4:7, 9; Eph. 6:21, 22. The Church was suffering from the teaching of a false philosophy which combined Oriental mysticism with Jewish ritualism, and turned the disciples from simple faith in Christ. The object of this Epistle, therefore, is to set forth the majesty and glory of our Lord's person and character.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

1. The Gospel Bearing Fruit.

Colossians 1:1-8. The saints are men of faith, for their holiness is derived from Christ, but they are also faithful men, and will not betray their trust. *Grace* is the Greek and *peace* the Hebrew greeting. We can do a great deal with those whom we desire to correct or instruct, if we begin by commending all that is worthy of being praised. Thus the Apostle rejoices in the evidences of the trinity of Christian graces—Faith, Hope, and Love. His prayer-book was filled with intercession. One marvels at the accomplishment of this extraordinary man, who, in addition to his travels, labors, writings, and toil for his daily bread, had time for such abundant prayerfulness.

There is a note of triumph in his reference to the reception given to the gospel in all the world. The handful of corn on the top of the mountains was already beginning to shake like Lebanon. It seemed as though victory was assured; and if only the Church had possessed more men like him, the world would have been saved some sad experiences. Note the unaffected humility of the Apostle in classing Epaphras with himself as his beloved fellow-servant in the household of God.

2. Our Wondrous Privileges in Christ.

Colossians 1:9-20. Here is a paragraph which may fitly form part of our daily intercession for ourselves and others. We all need a quicker insight into God's will, and this is only acquired through the wisdom and understanding communicated by the Holy Spirit to our spirits. But that understanding is conditioned, as in v. 10, by a daily behavior which pleases God and bears fruit in every good work. It is as we slowly climb the ascent of consistent living that the landscape of God's

nature expands around us. As character and knowledge grow, so will our spiritual strength; but notice that frequently such strength is needed not so much for great exploits, as for the patient bearing of the Cross, v. 11.

In view of the fact that we are being qualified for an inheritance in light, there should be a song of perennial thanksgiving proceeding from us. What a wonder that the sons of ignorance and night can dwell in the Eternal Light, through the Eternal Love! It is not enough to receive the forgiveness of sins, we must be conformed to the image of the Son, who is himself the image of the Father, v. 15. Notice the pre-eminence of Jesus—in creation, v. 16; in the Church, v. 18; in resurrection, v. 18; and in the great enterprise of reconciliation and restoration, v. 20. Let him be pre-eminent for us also!

3. Laboring To Perfect the Church.

Colossians 1: 21-29. How wonderful is God! His scheme of grace embraces the world of men, but he can concentrate on individual souls as unworthy as ours. *You . . . hath he reconciled.* And he will never abandon his work until we arrive in his presence-chamber without spot or blemish or any such thing. But, of course, the putting forth of his power on our behalf is conditioned on our steadfast faith.

Paul drank deeply of the Master's cup. It seemed as if Jesus had trusted him with participation in the sorrows of Gethsemane and Calvary. And he was thus fitted for the stewardship of two great secrets, which it was his joy to unfold. In Eph. 3 he says that he was commissioned to show the Gentiles that they might become fellow-heirs; but here, v. 27, that they might experience the indwelling of Christ. Those who are conscious of that indwelling know its riches of power and joy and victory. Their hope of glory is dimmed by no fear, because they have the Christ in their hearts, and, therefore, heaven in their hearts, so it follows natur-

ally that their hearts will one day be with Christ in heaven. Christ *in us* is the hope of glory. Note the individual interest which the true pastor takes in his flock, as shown in the repeated use of *every man*.

4. Established in Their Faith.

Colossians 2:1-12. If you know Christ, you can lay your hand on the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. You know them, not by the intellect but by the heart. They are matters of daily experience. The Apostle's aim in this chapter is to put his converts on their guard against those who might divert them from their simple faith in Jesus, and their sufficiency in him. The keynotes are *Take heed* and *Let no one*.

The first act of the Christian life is to receive Christ, and every moment afterward we must continue receiving him. The act must become an attitude. Breathe in the love and power of Jesus. Take deep breaths. Then we shall be rooted in him in secret, and built up in him in our outward walk and behavior. If we have Christ, we have all God's fullness, and this is easily accessible. Like Jacob's ladder, he links us with God. What need have we for celestial beings, like those invented by the Gnostics, or for the rite of circumcision, as insisted on by the Jews? We have everything in Jesus. He has fulfilled the Law in all respects on our behalf. Let us put the waters of entire surrender and consecration between our past, our sins, and the world, and rise into his life, the life of resurrection glory and power.

5. Avoiding Errors.

Colossians 2:13-23. The reiteration of the prepositions *in* and *with* emphasizes our close identification with our Saviour. Such we are in the purpose of God, and so we should be in daily experience. In union with him we have once and forever put away the sins of the flesh, have lain in his grave, have passed to the heavenside of death, and are living under the blue sky

of acceptance with God. Our Master's victory is potentially ours. He won it, but we may share its fruits. Yet faith must apprehend and affirm these blessings. The land of Canaan is ours by right, but every inch has to be claimed by faith. "Faith is an affirmation and act, that bids eternal truth be fact."

We must not allow our religious life to become a piece of outward ritual, vs. 16, 17; nor permit the supposed mediation of angels to obscure the supreme majesty of our Lord, vs. 18, 19. We who have died with Christ must not be always regulating ourselves by the *don'ts* of the Law. Let us enter Christ's more intimate fellowship and live on the positive side. Ours should be the freedom of a full life, and the ampler vision of the mountains. Nothing else really avails against the indulgence of the flesh.

6. Seeking the "Things That Are Above."

Colossians 3: 1-11. Let us repeat the glorious truth, which was doubtless the heart of Paul's teaching, that our old nature has been nailed in Christ to the Cross, and laid in the grave; and that our real self, the second Adam, has entered the new world of resurrection. We belong to the world on the threshold of which Jesus said, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended." We must guard against the defiling touch of the world, of sin, and of the old self-life. We stand between two worlds, each solicits us: let us yield to the influences that pull us upward, and not to those that anchor us to this sinful and vain world. Our eternal blessedness has begun, let us walk in it.

In Christ we profess to *have* put off the old man, *i. e.*, the habits of our former life, v. 9; now let us actually do so, in the power of the Holy Spirit. We profess to have put on the risen Christ, v. 10; now let us don the attire and habits of the new man. Too many Christians resemble Lazarus, quickened from his death-sleep, but still arrayed in grave-clothes. Too few array themselves in the radiant beauty of the risen

Lord, which is the common heritage of all who believe in him, whatever their rank or nationality.

7. Love, Peace, and Praise.

Colossians 3:12-17. The articles of the Christian's dress are enumerated here, and we need to refer to this list continually in order to be sure that none of them is missing from our spiritual wardrobe. We must not always live in the negative of avoiding wrong, the positive has a clear claim on us; and in each circumstance of trial or temptation we must advance to meet it, arrayed in Christ. As the Lord acted, so must we. We must partake of the family likeness. When a Christian friend manifests over the breakfast-table some ugly feature of the old life, we may fairly urge him to return to his room and complete his dressing. Love is the girdle of the Christian attire.

Let the peace of Christ rule within. Let the word of Christ dwell in the innermost chambers of the soul. Let there be mutual love and wholesome glee, the song in the life, and the grace in the heart. Whatever is wrong will shiver to pieces like a glass when the name of Jesus is spoken over it. The thought of him is the touchstone of trial as well as the talisman of victory. A thankful heart makes a victorious and attractive character.

8. Home and Business Relations.

Colossians 3:18—4:1. From these high flights into the eternal and divine, Paul turns to the daily duties of the home, and demands that in the simplest domestic concerns the disciple should ever keep in mind the high claims of Christ. No act of life can be left outside the sacred enclosure of his everlasting love. As the moon affects the tides around the world, even in the smallest indentations of the coast, so must the power of Christ's resurrection make itself felt in the behavior of the servant and the child.

It is specially beautiful to notice the Apostle's constant reference to the bond-slaves who formed so important an element in the early Church. There they learned that in Christ all souls were free, and that in him also master and slave were brethren. Stealing out at night from the arduous labors of his lot, many a poor slave would return with new conceptions of his daily tasks, to be applied to the service rendered to his Lord. No angel in heaven's high temple has more definite service to the King than any honest and industrious servant may daily render to Jesus. Here is the dignity of labor indeed! And, masters, remember *your* Master.

9. Prayer and Daily Living.

Colossians 4:2-9. We must pray more. Our lives cannot maintain the Godward attitude without prolonged seasons of communication with him through the Word. This is so important that we must be ever on the watch against whatever might mar the life of devotion. Intercession will often unlock frost-bitten lips and make our souls glow. *Withal praying also for us.* If we are shut in and cannot perform active service, we can surely pray for those who are entrusted with the mystery of Christ; and let those who are called to active service be ready to step in when God opens the door, v. 3. The limitations of life are no excuse for idleness, v. 4.

It is not easy to walk in wisdom towards those that are without. But God will teach us how to *buy up* opportunities and crowd each of them with good service. Our talk may sparkle like salt and purify as it does. Paul bound his fellow-workers to himself by the high estimate he placed on them. Love idealizes. Probably we should have thought some of these men to be very ordinary, but the Apostle saw them in hues borrowed from his own heart. Onesimus, a runaway slave, recently converted, is described as *a faithful and beloved brother!*

10. Christian Greetings.

Colossians 4:10-18. What a noble group had gathered round the Apostle in his enforced residence in Rome! That hired room of his must have been filled time after time with most interesting groups; and each friend was dear to the lion-heart, and intent on some act of loving devotion. Aristarchus had been with him in the Ephesian riot; Mark was endeavoring to make good his former lapse of courage; Epaphras, who had come from Colosse, was remarkable for his soul-agony and prayer-labor on his friends' behalf; Luke, the beloved physician, always on the alert to minister to the malaria or other malady that afflicted him; and Demas, of whom perhaps he had begun to have suspicions, 2 Tim. 4:10. Archippus is believed to have been a son of Philemon, and chief presbyter of Laodicea. Does the injunction, v. 16, imply that already the church there had begun to grow cold, Rev. 3:15? The closing words were probably written in autograph. The clumsy handwriting was accounted for by the weight of the fetters on the poor wrists, yet his heart was full of love and joy.

(For Review Questions see next page.)

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

OUTLINE.

- (a) What does the Epistle teach about Christ's pre-eminence?
- (b) What about the life of Christ's followers?

INTRODUCTION.

- (c) By whom had the church at Colosse been established?
- (d) When was this Epistle written? What other Epistles were written about the same time?
- (e) What serious situation in the Colossian church did the Apostle seek to remedy?

SECTIONS 1-10. CHAPTERS 1-4.

(Each question applies to the paragraph of corresponding number in the Comments.)

1. What report had Paul received concerning the church at Colosse? To whom was he indebted for this?
2. In what ways is the pre-eminence of Christ manifested?
3. How could Paul rejoice in his sufferings?
4. Against what dangers does he warn the Colossians?
5. How does the work of Christ free us from the reproach of human judgment?
6. What qualities are incompatible with the Christian life?
7. What is the character of the new man in Christ Jesus?
8. How does Christ determine all our social and family relations?
9. What does Paul earnestly desire of the Colossians?
10. From whom and to whom are Christian greetings expressed in the closing section?

III

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE
THESSALONIANS

OUTLINE OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

BUILDING UP ONE ANOTHER

SALUTATION1:1.

I. FOUNDING AND GROWTH OF THE THESSALONIAN CHURCH1:2—3:13.

1. *Fruits of the Gospel in Thessalonica*1:2-10.
2. *Paul's Missionary Methods*2:1-12.
3. *Results of His Labor*2:13-20.
4. *Visit of Timothy*3:1-10.
5. *Benediction*3:11-13.

II. THE WALK OF THE CHRISTIAN4—5.

1. *The Need of Purity*4:1-8.
2. *The Need of Love for the Brethren*4:9-12.
3. *The Return of Christ*4:13-18.
4. *How To Be Prepared*5:1-8.
5. *The Will of God for the Christian*5:9-22.

CONCLUSION5:23-28.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

Thessalonica stood on the seaboard, and was the center of a large trade, which it shared with Corinth and Ephesus. It is the Saloniki of today, to which the interest of the world has recently been directed. It contained a large colony of Jews and a synagogue. The Apostle visited it, as recorded in Acts 17:2-9. Probably he dispatched this Epistle from Corinth; compare 1 Thess. 1:1 and 3:1 with Acts 18:15. It is the earliest of the Epistles and more elementary than the later ones. An interesting study would be to trace the development of the Apostle's thought to the fuller and deeper teachings of the Epistles to the churches at Rome and Ephesus.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

1. Imitators and Examples.

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10. This chapter abounds in thanksgiving; and the Apostle recites the many beautiful and hopeful traits of character and behavior by which the members of this Christian community had endeared themselves to him. Notice his favorite grouping of faith, hope, and love. We are taught to crave for these in our own soul-garden, and to rejoice to find them blossoming in others. Too often the gospel comes only in *word*; let us seek the other three accompaniments of v. 5. What a blessed thing it would be if our church life were so full of the Spirit of Christ that the ministers would not need to say anything! "By whose preaching," a lad was asked, "were you converted?" "By no one's preaching," was the reply, "but by my Aunt Mary's living."

There are three memorable steps indicated in vs. 9 and 10. Turn unto God: serve him as true and living; wait for the coming of the Son of man. The last phrase strikes the keynote of this Epistle. The Church is encouraged to stand expectant at the oriel window. Behind her is the night from which she has been delivered, and on the bosom of the dawn shines the morning star.

2. The Fruit of Unsparing Labor.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12. Paul preached in great conflict of soul because of his passionate desire for the salvation of men. In this, many of the notable servants of God have shared; and we shall not attain to the great end of our ministry unless the seeds we sow are steeped in prayers and tears. The Apostle viewed the gospel as a sacred deposit left with him by God on man's behalf, v. 4. Do we sufficiently realize that as

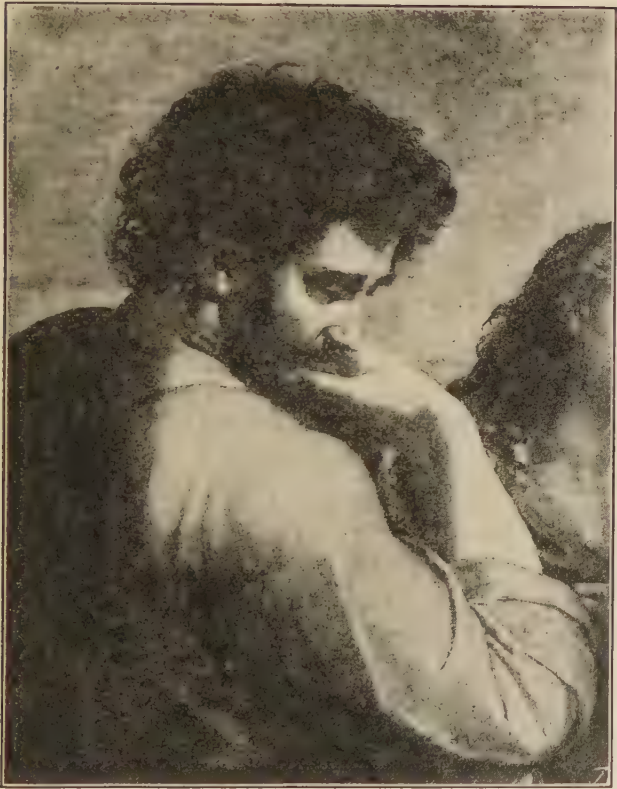
Christ is our Trustee, entrusted with God's gift for us, so we are executors of his bequests to our fellow-men, who will have serious charges to bring against us if we hoard for ourselves what was meant for them? The questions which should sustain and quicken us are: "What does God think of my service?—Is *he* pleased?"

Combined with Paul's strength of purpose there were the sweetness and tenderness of a nurse. Self-denying labor for his own maintenance took from his eyes their needed sleep, and was another proof of his sincerity and devotion. There was no harm in receiving gifts, but Paul was most anxious to do nothing that would invalidate his testimony, or be unworthy of the Master he served. Admirable example for us all!

3. The Apostle's Glory and Joy.

1 Thessalonians 2:13-20. The Christian worker always should wait on God till he gets the word of *the message*. There is an essential difference between delivering a sermon or an address and delivering a message. The latter is direct, eager; you wait to be sure it is understood; you expect an answer. A gospel message *works* in those who believe. That its ultimate effect will be to bring us into collision with the world-spirit goes without saying. For this conflict the Christian must be prepared in advance.

The separation between this true, strong, loving soul and his converts was a bereavement, though only for an hour, R.V. margin, and his heart longed to be with them again. He clung to them the more tenaciously because he had been cast out by his Jewish brethren, and also because he looked for a great revenue of joy and glory to accrue to the Saviour's name. His one purpose seems to have been to accumulate garlands of saved souls, as children make garlands of flowers in spring, that he might lay them at the feet of the Redeemer. Satan hinders, but Jesus helps and smiles his benediction.



HEAD OF ST. PAUL.

From Painting by RAPHAEL. Italian Artist.

4. Awakening Thanksgiving and Intercession.

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13. At the outset observe that marginal reading by which Timothy is described as *a fellow-worker with God*. What a wonderful phrase, and yet it is applicable to all true workers for God! Think what it must have been for a young artist to be permitted to collaborate with Michelangelo! No thought of his own comfort interfered with Paul's efforts for the young churches he had planted; he was only eager that they should be established and comforted amid the storm of persecution that swept over them. There is only one path for the followers of Jesus, and it is lined with flints and flecked with blood.

Though the waters surged up to Paul's heart, he could bear anything, if only his work stood fast. What he suffered was as nothing compared with his joy at the stability of his charges. As he wrought day and night at his handicraft, so he prayed day and night for them. The stitches put into the tent cloth were accompanied by the holy threads of prayerful intercession. He only longed that Christ would make a straight thoroughfare to them, and would keep them blameless and strong.

5. Called to Sanctification.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8. The first paragraph of this chapter exhorts to purity, the second to industry, the third to expectation of the Second Advent. But the three are closely combined, because those who wait for the Lord will instinctively wear white robes. The body is compared to a vessel, and we must keep it clean for the Master's use, walking day by day so as to please him. Before Enoch was translated, he had the testimony borne him that he had pleased God, Heb. 11:5. It is God's will that we should be holy;—the whole object of our redemption has this for its purpose. Therefore we *ought* to be holy, and if we ought we *can*, and

if we can we *must*; and if we must we *will*! If you cannot possess yourself of your own nature, be possessed by the Holy Spirit. God giveth his Holy Spirit for this purpose.

No one must come in between husband and wife to defraud either of the lawful love which each should receive from the other. The *home* has been rescued and exalted by Christ, and the Christian Church must still be its custodian, not only inculcating the ideal, but revealing the sufficient power for its defense.

6. United Now and Hereafter in the Lord.

1 *Thessalonians* 4:9-18. It is suggested that God himself is the teacher of love. Others may teach the lower classes in the school of grace, but the highest is reserved for the Supreme Teacher. Note that recurring *more and more*, 3:12; 4:1, 10. The distribution of goods in the early Church may have led to abuses, which the injunctions here given were intended to rectify. It is well to bring up every child to know one means of livelihood, and children are much more likely to grow up into noble and useful people, if they are encouraged to work for their living. *Do something in the world!*

These disciples anticipated the speedy return of the Lord and feared lest those who had died would be worse off than they. The Apostle bade them dismiss such fears, because they who remained alive until the coming of the Lord would have no precedence over others who had died. Paul assures them that they who had fallen asleep were with Jesus, and that they would accompany him when he came again. To those who needed to be raised, Jesus would be "the Resurrection"; to those who were living, he would be "the Life." They that believed in him, though they had died, yet would they live; and they who lived till he came would never die.

7. Ready for "the Day of the Lord."

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11. To the Apostle "the day of the Lord" was near. He expected it in his lifetime, and if we remember that the Lord's words with reference to it were in part fulfilled when Jerusalem fell, it is clear that his expectation was not altogether vain.

The suddenness of the Advent was the theme of Jesus' reiterated assurances. See Matt. 24:38, 43; Luke 17:29, 30. The *world* spends its days in careless indifference (*sleep*), or in sensual enjoyment (*drunkenness*); but *believers* are bidden to be soldier-like in their attire and watchfulness. Ponder that wonderful word in v. 10. *Together* implies that Christians now living are closely united with those who have died. The state we call death, but which the Apostle calls sleep—because our Lord's resurrection has robbed it of its terror—is as full of vitality as the life which we live day by day in this world. We live *together*, animated by the same purposes—they on that side and we on this. Whether here or there, life is "in him." The closer we live to him, the nearer we are to them.

8. "Without Blame" at His Coming.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-28. The remainder of the chapter is filled with brief sentences of exhortation, like cablegrams from our Heavenly Captain to his soldiers, who, in the previous section, are described as wearing the breastplate of faith and love. As we endeavor to put them into practice, we become conscious of a new and divine energy entering and quickening our nature. It is the God of peace who is at work, co-operating with our poor endeavors and sanctifying us wholly.

Each soul has a ministry to others, v. 14. A sketch is here given of the ideal believer, vs. 16-22; full of joy, constant in prayer, giving thanks in everything, loving with the unquenched fire of the Holy Spirit, willing to listen to any voice that may bear a divine mes-

sage, testing all events and utterances with a celestial solvent, steadfast in good, and persistent against evil. This is a high standard, and impossible of realization apart from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. But when the inner shrine is truly surrendered to him, he will possess the whole temple, even to our physical well-being. God is faithful and will never fail the soul that dares to be all that he wills.

(For Review Questions see next page.)

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

OUTLINE.

- (a) How had the church in Thessalonica been planted, and how had it prospered?
- (b) What does the Christian need, and how is the return of Christ an incentive to it?

INTRODUCTION.

- (c) For what was the city of Thessalonica distinguished? By what name is it known today?
- (d) When was the letter to the Thessalonians written? What is its position among the Pauline writings?
- (e) How does the teaching of this Epistle compare with that of Romans and Ephesians?

SECTIONS 1-8. CHAPTERS 1-5.

(Each question applies to the paragraph of corresponding number in the Comments.)

- 1. How extensive was the influence of the Thessalonian Christians?
- 2. What had been the character of Paul's ministry in Thessalonica?
- 3. How had the Thessalonians shared the experience of the Judæan Christians?
- 4. To what does Paul refer as necessary to his very life?
- 5. How is holiness possible to believers?
- 6. What words of comfort does Paul give concerning those who are fallen asleep?
- 7. Unto what has God appointed us?
- 8. What are some of the practical commands with which the Epistle concludes?

IV

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE
THESSALONIANS

OUTLINE OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

SALUTATION	1:1, 2.
1. <i>The Integrity of the Faith and Life of the Thessalonians</i>	1:3-12.
2. <i>The Man of Sin and the Coming of Christ</i>	2:1-12.
3. <i>Prayer for the Thessalonians</i>	2:13-17.
4. <i>A Request for the Prayers of the Thessa- lonians</i>	3:1-5.
5. <i>The Christian's Manner of Life</i>	3:6-15.
CONCLUSION	3:16, 17.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

This second Epistle was probably written shortly after the first. The Apostle appears to have heard of some who claimed to be acting on his authority, and were announcing the immediate coming of the Lord. This had so excited and unsettled the disciples of Thessalonica that they were neglecting their means of livelihood. Writing from Corinth, where he was staying at the time, Paul endeavored to allay that spirit of unrest and to call these disciples back to their everyday duties.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

1. Faithful through Faith in a Righteous God.

2 Thessalonians 1:1-12. Notice the remarkable couplets of this chapter. Grace and peace, v. 2; faith and love, v. 3; faith and patience, v. 4; tribulation for those who trouble, and rest for those who are troubled, vs. 6, 7; know not, obey not, v. 8; the presence of the Lord, the glory of his power, v. 9; glorified and admired, v. 10; the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith, v. 11. Like mirrors that face each other, these words flash back and forth their depths of sacred significance.

What marvelous scenes the future conceals for believers!—such as rest for the weary, palms of victory for the defeated, glory for the name and cause of Christ, and, above all, the revelation of that dear Presence with which we have been so constantly in touch. But how inexpressibly awful and terrible, on the other hand, the fate of the wilful rejecters of the love of God!

The final prayer has always been highly prized by God's people. If they shall ever be worthy of their high calling, it is for him to make them so. His being *glorified* and *admired* in his saints is not a far-off event, but one within the possibilities of the present hour; and the name of Jesus may be magnified *here* and *now* in us, as it *will be* finally and more perfectly. Compare vs. 10 and 12.

2. Untroubled by Threatening Rumors.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. The Apostle sets himself to correct certain erroneous impressions which had unsettled the church in Thessalonica. Notice how reverently he speaks of our Saviour. Once and again he alludes to him as the Lord Jesus Christ. He is surely coming, and as surely will his saints be gathered to him,

as the drops of moisture are drawn up from ponds and oceans, to cluster in the clouds in radiant beauty around the sun.

But certain events must take place first. There must be a great apostasy and the unveiling of "the mystery of lawlessness," which even at that time was already at work. First, the man of sin; then, the Son of man. First, he that set himself forth as God; then, God manifest in the flesh. First, the revelation of sin; then, the revelation of perfect salvation. Dan. 11:36 seems to have suggested Paul's words, which have been applied to Nero or Caligula, to Judaism or the Papal Church, and to some future manifestation of Satanic hatred toward the Church of God. But whatever form it may assume, the coming of Jesus will absolutely destroy this power of Antichrist. Let us be warned by the doom of those that are involved in this great apostasy, and ever cherish the love of the truth of Christ, that we may be saved.

3. Held Firm and Guarded from Evil.

2 *Thessalonians* 2:13—3:5. This closing section is full of comfort and inspiration. Believers in Christ are the beloved of God; their salvation dates from his eternal love and choice, and his purpose for us is being wrought out in our characters by the Holy Spirit, who ministers to us through the truth. Our comfort is eternal and our hope is unfailing.

Paul was now preaching at Corinth, and he asks that the gospel may *run*, 3:1, R.V. Oh, for a divine impatience, that we may be content with nothing short of this! When unreasonable and wicked men try you, turn to the Lord, who is faithful to his promises and to his saints. The stronger the gales of opposition and hatred, the deeper should we become established and rooted in the truth. The word *direct* in v. 5 may be rendered, *make a thoroughfare through*; that is, we desire that our hearts should be a highway down which

the love of God and the patience of our Lord may pass to a world of sin and fret. Let us ever connect the patience and kingdom of our Lord, as in Rev. 1:9.

4. **Separate; Industrious; Persevering.**

2 *Thessalonians* 3:6-18. From his high expectations of the Advent, the Apostle turns to the prosaic commonplaces of daily toil. There was need for this, because the expectation of the speedy return of Christ was disarranging the ordinary course of life and duty. People were neglecting the common round of daily tasks, and idlers were imposing on Christian generosity. Against these the Apostle sets his own example of sitting far into the night at his tent-making. See 1 *Thess.* 2:9. The best attitude for those that look for their Lord is not in pressing their faces against the oriel window, to behold the chariot of their returning Master, but in plying their toil with deft hands and consecrated hearts.

Note that parting salutation, v. 16, and let us believe that the God of peace is causing peace for us at all times and in all ways. Even storms are forwarding our boat to its haven, and we shall be borne in with the flood tide of his mercy. Every wind is a home wind to the child of God, setting in from the quarter of his love. Every messenger, however garbed, brings God's salutation and benediction.

(For Review Questions see next page.)

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS

OUTLINE.

- (a) What further teaching have we here about the return of Christ?
- (b) How does the Epistle emphasize (1) prayer; (2) conduct?

INTRODUCTION.

- (c) Where was Paul staying when he wrote this Epistle?
- (d) What conditions had developed which made it necessary for him to write again?

SECTIONS 1-4. CHAPTERS 1-3.

(Each question applies to the paragraph of corresponding number in the Comments.)

1. What are the contrasted destinies of those who accept and those who reject the gospel?
2. What great event must precede the coming of Christ?
3. Why did Paul desire the prayers of the Thessalonians?
4. What special command had Paul given them while with them? Why is it now repeated? What is the closing benediction?

V

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

OUTLINE OF THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

THE CHURCH AND ITS MINISTRY.

SALUTATION1:1, 2.

I. THE CHARGE CONCERNING THE CHURCH 1:3—3:16.

1. *The Need of Love, Faith and a
Good Conscience*1:3-20.
2. *The Conduct of Public Prayer*....2:1-8.
3. *The Place of Women in the Church* 2:9-15.
4. *The Appointment of Bishops*3:1-7.
5. *The Appointment of Deacons*....3:8-13.

EXHORTATION3:14-16.

II. "A GOOD MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST" 4—6.

1. *His Ministry and Teaching*4.
2. *His Bearing toward Elders and
Widows*5.
3. *His Attitude toward Slavery*6:1, 2.
4. *Characteristics of False Teachers*..6:3-10.
5. *The Minister's Personal Life*....6:11-16.
6. *His Charge to the Rich*6:17-19.

CONCLUSION6:20, 21.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

This Epistle was written not long after Paul had left Ephesus for Macedonia; but it is a matter of debate as to when this was, some holding that it must have been about the time of the great riot which drove the Apostle from the city; others that it was nearer the time of his second and last imprisonment at Rome.

Timothy is first mentioned as living at Lystra, Acts 16:1. His mother, Eunice, was a Jewess, 2 Tim. 1:5; his father was a Greek. He was early the subject of pious influence, 2 Tim. 3:14, 15. He was well spoken of by his fellow-believers, and became the intimate friend and companion of the Apostle.

The Epistle was designed to instruct him how to deal with false teachers, how to conduct public worship, and to urge him to cultivate all those qualities which would better equip him for the discharge of his important duties.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

1. A Charge against "Vain Talking."

1 Timothy 1:1-11. The relation of Paul to Timothy is an example of one of those beautiful friendships between an older and a younger man, in which each is the complement of the other, 1 Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:22. Timothy was a lad of fifteen when converted at Lystra, and was probably about thirty-five years of age when this Epistle was addressed to him. He was enthusiastic and devoted but at times showed signs of timidity, and the Apostle watched over him with tender interest.

In this chapter the young minister is warned against the Gnostic heresy, *i. e.*, the heresy of the *knowing-ones*, who pretended to give revelations about the angels and their ministry, and to bridge the gulf between man and God by a whole series of mysterious imaginary beings. Their teaching led from spiritual pride to sensuality, for they accounted the body as inherently evil. All this was contrary to *healthy* doctrine. That word *sound*, or *healthy*, is peculiar to the Pastoral Epistles, 1 Tim. 6:33; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1. It suggests a certain test of the various teachers who cross our paths. The question always is, Do these words of theirs promote the health of the soul, and above all, *love* out of a pure heart and a good conscience?

2. An Example of Christ's Long-Suffering.

1 Timothy 1:12-20. The Apostle breaks off into expressions of heartfelt thanks to God for the abounding grace which had overcome his former obstinacy and blindness. Only his ignorance could palliate his outrage and insult toward Christ, who was now the beloved object of his entire surrender. He had been a blasphemer against God, Acts 26:9-11; a persecutor towards his fellow-men, Gal. 1:13; injurious, insolent,

full of overweening pride. He felt that he had been the chief of sinners, because he had sinned against more knowledge and opportunity than others. It is only when we see God, that we know ourselves and repent in dust and ashes. The Apostle, however, comforted himself in this at least, that through coming time the most hopeless and abandoned sinners would take heart as they considered his case. He was a sample of mercy, a specimen of what Christ could do, an outline sketch to be filled in. Believe *on* Christ. Faith rests on Christ as foundation. Peter and John use another preposition, *toward*, or *into*, *i. e.*, they conceive of union with him, to which all else is preliminary. War the good warfare, that against sin. When men thrust away faith and a good conscience, they stab their pilot and make shipwreck. See 2 Tim. 2:17, 18; 4:14, 15.

3. Prayer and Modest Adorning.

1 Timothy 2:1-15. The Apostle especially urged intercessory prayer, because it meant so much to himself. Three different words are used of prayer, because there are so many ways of approaching God. It is our duty to pray for those in authority, and to seek after a calm and quiet life in all godliness and gravity. It was most important that Christians should not be suspected of revolutionary designs or civic turbulence. If they had to suffer, it must be only on account of their religious faith. The solidarity of our race is the reason for our wide-embracing supplications. The whole race is one in the creation of God and the ransom of Christ; we are therefore one with all men, and should express in prayer the common sins and sorrows of mankind.

The *men* were bidden to lead in public prayer, and to see that the hands they uplifted were clean, while the *women* joined quietly after the Eastern fashion. There was nothing revolutionary in Paul's teaching. He was content, in minor matters, to conform to the usages of his age, though promulgating doctrines which would

ultimately revolutionize the position of womanhood. A holy married life, with the bearing and training of children, is, as a rule, the appointed path for woman, and this will lead to their salvation through faith in the Holy One who was born in Bethlehem.

4. Fitness for Christian Leadership.

1 Timothy 3:1-7. One of Timothy's most urgent duties was to take care that those who held office in the churches were beyond reproach. The tone of a Christian community is largely that of its leaders. As the margin suggests, the bishop of the early Church was an overseer or presbyter. See Acts 20:28, R.V. God's minister must not only be irreproachable as far as the outside world is concerned, but exemplary in his domestic relations. Such was the facility of divorce among the Jews that it was a common thing for a man to have more than one woman living who had been his wife: but by Paul's ruling this would debar him from holding office, unless his divorce be for cause as provided in Matt. 19:9.

Notice how often those words *grave, sober-minded, temperate* occur in this chapter. The effect of a good sermon will be spoiled if a man yields to foolish levity or intemperate habits. Moderation, serenity of temper, freedom from love of money, a well-ordered household, an obedient and reverent family—these are signs that a man may aspire to the sacred work of the ministry; and these are the qualities which people should look for in candidates for pulpits, more than those of rhetoric, brilliance, or outward attractiveness.

5. Qualifications of Church Officials.

1 Timothy 3:8-16. Younger men, referred to as deacons, were appointed to subordinate tasks, especially the relief of the poor, Acts 6. Though their service was less important, their character must be of the highest quality. The strength of a church is as much in the godliness of those who fill subordinate

offices, as in its acknowledged leaders. The caretaker of a church should be a man of as high ideals as its chief pastor. Nothing is common or unclean, nothing trivial and unimportant, where Christ's honor and glory are concerned. In the prophet's vision the very snuffers of the candlestick were of gold.

The women mentioned here are deaconesses, Rom. 16:1. Governor Bradford, describing the church of the Pilgrim Fathers, says of a deaconess: "She honored her place and was an ornament to the congregation. She did frequently visit the sick and weak, and would gather relief for them. She was obeyed as a mother in Israel."

The Church is the earthly dwelling-place of God. It lifts up and maintains the standard of truth in the midst of men, therefore it is hated. It is most necessary that Christians should bear witness to the truth, collectively as well as individually. The facts given us to witness to are enumerated here in the six clauses of an ancient antiphonal chant.

6. Reject False and Foolish Teaching.

1 Timothy 4:1-8. We have here the Apostle's forecast of the last times, *i. e.*, the condition in which men will find themselves as the age draws to a close. Notwithstanding all that Christ has done, the prevalence of evil will be enormous, not because of any failure in God but because the Church has failed to be the organ through which his saving help could reach mankind. The symptoms are set forth with great clearness, such as demon spirits dwelling and working in men, error taught under the specious guise of excessive religious devotion, consciences seared, natural instincts thwarted and outraged. On the contrary, let us believe that the whole body, and all gifts that are natural and innocent, are to be cherished and used under three sanctions: 1. They must be accepted and enjoyed with thanksgiving to the Creator and Father. 2. They must

be sanctioned by the Word of God. 3. Their use and enjoyment must not interfere with our prayer-life.

The minister of Christ must be daily nourished by the words of Christian truth. If he is not fed on Christ's body and blood, his teaching will soon deteriorate, John 6. He must also exercise himself in godliness with as much care as the gymnast, who is continually exercising his joints and muscles so as to keep supple and alert. This is also God's purpose in the spiritual trials and discipline which he sends.

7. "Take Heed to Thyself."

1 Timothy 4:9-16. In all Christian service we must set our hope on the living God. Nothing counts apart from God. Prayer implies that all our gifts and efforts cover only a small part of our efficiency. There are infinite resources in God, which he is waiting to employ in human affairs, and of which we fail to make use. The Christian worker, therefore, must not only labor and strive, but must hope in the living God, whose saving grace is at the disposal of our faith. The faith exercised by the average man results in obtaining only natural things; the supernatural is secured by the faith of those who have made profounder discoveries of God, and can therefore make demands on his resources, which are hidden from the princes of this world.

In order to succeed, we must give ourselves wholly to our work for God. In answer to prayer great gifts had been communicated to Timothy, but he had to give heed to them, use them, and stir up the slumbering embers of the fire, kindled at his ordination. It is worthy of notice that the Apostle's injunctions do not include a single allusion to priestly or sacramental service, but urge to boldness of character, v. 12; diligent study, v. 13; rigorous orthodoxy, v. 16; and the daily self-watch of the soul, v. 16. Take to heart the blessed assurance of the closing sentence of the chapter.

8. Wise Treatment of Young and Old.

1 *Timothy* 5:1-8. That minister of Jesus is happiest who introduces the tone and manner of family life into the church, vs. 1, 2. The attitude of son or brother to other men is peculiarly fitting. But he must always keep up the spiritual tone. It is so easy to descend to frivolity and familiarity. Remember that all intercourse with others must be governed by the words—*in all purity*.

The special references to widows evidence the early practice of the Church. Provision was made for godly women who had lost husbands by death, and who in return for the weekly gift from church funds, gave themselves to Christian service. The Apostle indicates the age and characteristics of those who might be eligible. It was his clear judgment, however, that, wherever possible, it was becoming for children to make such provision as would place an aged mother or other relative beyond the reach of want or any need of claiming maintenance from church funds. Our nurses and deaconesses are the modern counterparts of the order of widows in the early Church; yet the standard of Christian living here emphasized may well be pondered and prayed over by all Christian women, who should, as far as possible without fee or reward, consider church service only second to the claims of home.

9. Home-Keeping Industry Enjoined.

1 *Timothy* 5:9-16. The sphere of the younger woman must be in the home. This is the noblest work of all, and wherever it exists, it has the prior claim; yet even during the years of early motherhood there may still be opportunities of offering hospitality to strangers, ministering to the children of God who need refreshment and comfort, and diligently assisting in good work. These offices lovingly and humbly performed, will serve as a gracious opening for further ministries of the same description in the later period of life.

The Apostle says nothing about remarriage in general, but simply refers to the fact that young women who have become widows are likely to accept the offer of a second marriage, and so abjure that *first faith*, in which they had pledged themselves to the service of the church. Unless there is great watchfulness, the practice of going from house to house, ostensibly on church business, may degenerate into gossip-mongering. Therefore it was wiser not to put young women on the church service roll. If they did not marry a second time, they might at least work for the maintenance of others, widows like themselves, but less able to help themselves. There must be no idling.

10. Impartial and Kindly Supervision.

1 Timothy 5:17-25. A man of years was always to be honored, and if he were called to rule in the church, he was to be treated with double honor; but none should be appointed to that sacred office hastily or with partiality. Purity, gravity, and abstinence from alcohol were prime requisites in a Christian minister then, as they are now. It is clear from v. 23 that the Apostles and their helpers practiced total abstinence, or there had been no need for that special injunction to Timothy.

It is clear also from vs. 17, 18 that the early Church was encouraged to support its ministers. The Apostle quotes the words of our Lord, to maintain this contention, Matt. 10: 10; Luke 10:7. The character of a minister might not be lightly aspersed. If anything had to be said, the informant must lodge his complaint in the presence of witnesses, who could be witnesses against him, if the charge were found to be baseless and frivolous. But public wrongs must be met by public rebuke, that any suspicion of favoritism might be disarmed. No man, however, should be called to the sacred and responsible position of presbyter, unless he had been tested and approved. In forming judgments of the fitness of men for office, we must

not judge wholly by appearance—good or bad, vs. 24, 25.

11. Godliness Is True Gain.

1 Timothy 6:1-10. The Apostle gives rules for the treatment of the slaves who rendered service in the households of that time. If the slave was in the household of a heathen master, he must honor and glorify Christ by being respectful and obedient; but if the master was a Christian, and therefore a brother in the Lord, he was still required to yield courteous and willing service. Service rendered for the love of God must not be inferior to that rendered from fear of man.

There were many false teachers in the early Church, the chief aim of whom was to make money. They were proud and distempered, jealous and suspicious, juggling with words and given to splitting hairs. Godliness truly is great gain. It makes us content with what we have, and it opens to us stores of blessedness which the wealth of a Cræsus could not buy. It is good to have just what is necessary. More than that breeds anxiety. Let us leave the provision for our needs with God. He is pledged to give food and covering, the latter including shelter. Not money, but the love of it opens the sluices and floodgates of the soul, through which wash the destroying waters of passion that drown men in destruction and perdition. Remember that you can carry nothing out of this world except your character.

12. "Fight the Good Fight of the Faith."

1 Timothy 6:11-21. The poor need not envy the rich. Wealth makes no difference in the audit of eternity. A man cannot eat more than a certain amount of food, and wear more than a certain amount of clothing. If we have enough why envy others? The true wealth of life is in self-renunciation and beneficence. How different from the money-grabber is the man of God who flees such things, and follows after righteous-

ness, who fights the good fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and who never flinches from witnessing the good witness. If we suffer here with Jesus, we shall share in the glory of his manifestation. Notice the wealth of the Apostle's ascription to Jesus! Here are life in its spring, light at its source, power and authority in their original fountain. Let us claim these blessings and enthrone them in our lives.

The charge to the rich is eminently sound. We must set our hope not on the attainment of fleeting things, but in God who loves to give and see his children happy. We hold all that we have, that we may be God's channels of communication to others. What we hoard we lose, what we give away we store. The life which is life indeed can be acquired only through death and self-giving.

(For Review Questions see next page.)

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

OUTLINE.

- (a) What matters of church order does the Epistle treat?
- (b) What does it set forth as guides for the conduct of a Christian minister?

INTRODUCTION.

- (c) What information about Timothy may be gleaned from the book of Acts and the Epistles?
- (d) When was this Epistle written?
- (e) What was it designed to teach?

SECTIONS 1-12. CHAPTERS 1-6.

(Each question applies to the paragraph of corresponding number in the Comments.)

1. Why had Paul exhorted Timothy to tarry at Ephesus? What is the "end of the charge"? What words are peculiar to the Pastoral Epistles?
2. What saying is "worthy of all acceptance"?
3. After what manner should public worship be conducted?
4. What are the qualifications of a bishop?
5. How is the fitness of deacons and deaconesses to be determined?
6. What does the Spirit testify regarding later times?
7. Why was Timothy's authority likely to be discounted? How was he to guard against this?
8. What is said of those who provide not for their own households?
9. What instructions are given regarding widows in the early Church?
10. When are elders to be accounted worthy of double honor?
11. What is named as a root of all kinds of evil?
12. Why need the poor not envy the rich? What earnest plea concludes the Epistle?

VI

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

OUTLINE OF THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

THE APOSTLE'S FAREWELL MESSAGE.

SALUTATION	1: 1, 2.
1. <i>Thanksgiving for Timothy's Faith</i>	1:3-6.
2. <i>The Glory of the Gospel</i>	1:7-14.
<i>(False Friends and True</i>	1:15-18)
3. <i>"A Good Soldier of Christ Jesus"</i>	2:1-13.
4. <i>"A Good Workman That Needeth Not To</i> <i>Be Ashamed"</i>	2:14-26.
5. <i>Grievous Times in the Last Days</i>	3.
6. <i>The Triumphant Close of a Great Career</i>	4:1-8.
7. <i>Personal Instructions</i>	4:9-13.
8. <i>Final Experiences</i>	4:14-18.
9. <i>Greetings to Friends</i>	4:19-21.
CONCLUSION	4:22.

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

This is the last Epistle of the great Apostle, who was apparently awaiting sentence. He had already had audience with Caesar, and escaped, 2 Tim. 4:16, 17; but there could be no doubt as to the ultimate issue. When Paul indited these words he was imprisoned in the Mamertine dungeon, exposed to the chill ague of its damp walls, reeking with pestilence and recalling the miseries of generations of condemned criminals. There was one desire for the fulfillment of which he yearned. He longed to see once more the dear friend of earlier years, whom he had led into this life of stern suffering, and whose spirit seems to have been somewhat overwhelmed by its severity. It was this that led Paul to dispatch this second letter, filled with advice and exhortation in case Timothy could not come, but specially full of desire that he should come before winter set in and traveling became difficult, 2 Tim. 4:9, 21. There is no trace of despondency in this noble swan song. Though Paul had lost all things, he had gained Christ. "Glorious Apostle! Would that every leader's voice could burst, as he falls, into such a trumpet-sound, thrilling the young hearts that pant in the good fight and must never despair of final victory!"

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

1. "Stir Up the Gift Which Is in Thee."

2 Timothy 1:1-11. Lonely and facing death the Apostle fell back on the bedrock of the will of God. If it were the divine plan that he should finish his life-work in that miserable plight, he was content that it should be so. But he longs to see his beloved son in the faith once more. He desires to stir up the dead coal of his ardor, in which there was fire and heat, but not enough flame.

Apparently the young evangelist was becoming daunted by the gathering difficulties of the time and so Paul sets himself to encourage him. With this purpose in view he adduces his own example, v. 3, his fervent affection, v. 4, the memory of the sainted dead, v. 5, the solemn vows by which Timothy had bound himself at his ordination, v. 6, the divine donation of grace and power and love, v. 8, the eternal purpose which had received its fruition in the advent of Jesus, v. 9, the clear light which his resurrection had thrown on death and the hereafter, v. 10. Surely such a chain of arguments must have proved irresistible! God's soldiers must be brave and unflinching in meeting the opposition of the world. When once we realize that the stores which reside in God are at the disposal of our faith, we, too, shall be invulnerable and irresistible.

2. "Hold the Pattern of Sound Words."

2 Timothy 1:12-18. How striking Paul's reference to the double committal, as if there had been an agreed exchange between his Master and himself! Paul had handed over to Christ as a sacred deposit all that concerned his well-being in time and eternity, and Christ had handed over to him the interests of his Kingdom, which, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, he was re-

quired to maintain inviolate. It is a mutual exchange of which we all ought to know something. Give all to Christ and Christ becomes all to you. The proportion of your self-giving is the measure of your discovery of what Jesus will be to you.

Some of Paul's former friends shrank from identifying themselves with a suspect—the inmate of the condemned cell. It was no light matter to visit the bearer of a name which the world of that day detested, one who belonged to a sect accused of burning Rome. Demas, 2 Tim. 4:11, and others forsook him, but the good Ephesian, Onesiphorus, set about seeking him through all the prisons of Rome, and was not ashamed of his chain nor content with a single visit. He *oft* refreshed his friend. Paul sends a grateful message to his family, 4:19. Perhaps there is here a gentle hint to Timothy. Compare vs. 8 and 16. Never shrink from taking your place beside Christ's prisoners!

3. "A Good Soldier of Christ Jesus."

2 Timothy 2:1-9. Soldier, vs. 1-4: There is grace enough in Jesus for every need, but we must avail ourselves of it. We can expect nothing less than hardship, since life is a battlefield. Our one aim should be to please him who chose us to be soldiers. In order to be all that he would have us be, we must avoid entangling ourselves in the conditions around us. We must resemble a garrison in the town where it is quartered, and from which it may at any hour be summoned away. The less encumbered we are, the more easily shall we be able to execute the least command of our Great Captain. How high an honor it is to be enrolled among his soldiers!

Athlete, v. 5: Life is an amphitheater, filled with celestial spectators. Probably our worst antagonist is found in our own heart. If we win the crown, we must observe regulations as to diet, exercise, purity, 1 Cor. 9:24-27. *Husbandman*, v. 6: We ought to be working for God in his vineyard or harvest-field; but we are



THE YOUNG TIMOTHY WITH THE SCRIPTURES.

2 Timothy 1: 1-5; 3: 14, 15.

From Painting by JAMES SANT. Modern British Artist.

allowed to partake of the fruits. It is imperative that we should be nourished while we labor. In all these positions we must remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead. We must draw upon the power of his resurrection, and to do this, we must live on the heaven-side of the Cross. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live," Gal. 2:20.

4. "Approved unto God."

2 Timothy 2:10-18. The elect, vs. 10-13: The Apostle sketches the experiences of the elect soul. It must endure, suffer, and die with Christ, that out of its surrender may come the truest, richest life, John 12:25. There is no path to lasting success save that of the cross and grave of Christ. It has been allotted to the redeemed in the divine program; each must tread it separately and with resolute purpose. But there is no doubt as to the sequel of a true life. The world of men may count it a failure, but God pledges himself that as the pendulum swings here in the dark, it shall swing equally in yonder world of light. Three things are impossible with God—to die, to lie, and to fail the soul that trusts him. Even when we cannot muster faith enough, his word of promise cannot be frustrated in the case of those whose faith is weak and trembling as the smoking flax.

The workman, vs. 14-18: The one anxiety with us all should be to stand approved before God. As the R.V. margin suggests, we must hold a straight course in the word of truth. Our testimony should resemble an undeviating furrow. Let us construct in our life something which will be a permanent addition to the well-being of the world, so that at the last the Master may say that he is satisfied.

5. "A Vessel unto Honor."

2 Timothy 2:19-26. Two men had been named whose teachings had overthrown the faith of some; but in contradistinction to this lamentable defection, Paul

turns with thankfulness to the firm foundations of faith on which the Church is built. They stand firm, because they rest on incontestable facts, and are authenticated by the Christian experience of centuries. Medallion inscriptions were often placed on foundation stones. Here are two affixed to those of the Church—one between God and the believer, the other between the believer and the world. What a privilege to be known by God! What a responsibility to work worthily of him before men!

From the house the Apostle proceeds to the vessels within. Each of us stands on one of those four shelves. But those to be honored and which are most often in the Master's hands are not necessarily the gold vessels, but the clean ones, of whatever material. Cleanliness counts more with God than cleverness. Do not be anxious about your service; be ready for the Master to use you. Lie like a silver cup in the trough of the fountain, v. 25. Repentance is God's gift, but there is a *peradventure* in it. Men are drunk with the world's drugs; they need to be recovered. Notice that we may rescue for God men whom the devil has entrapped.

6. A Dark Picture of Evil Men.

2 Timothy 3:1-9. The last days of the present age are to be black and sorrowful. Sinful rejection of Christ will come to a head. We must not be misled by the wide-spread profession of the forms of religion; this may co-exist with the rankest apostasy. When women are conscious of sins against God, society, and themselves, they are very liable to the seduction of false teachers, who promise peace and condone impurity.

Tares and wheat grow together unto the harvest. The devil has always set himself to counterfeit God's handiwork: the Holy City by Babylon; the Son of man by the man of sin; blessedness by the worldling's giddy merriment. Thus the Egyptian conjurers repeated the miracles of Moses by resorting to sleight of hand.

So there is a pure gospel and a specious mimicry of it. Wait for the inevitable unfoldings of God's purpose. Time will show what is true and what is false. In the meantime, examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith.

7. Hold Fast to Inspired Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:10-17. The world does not love Christ or Christians any better than of old; and all who are minded to live godly lives will come inevitably to the cross in one form or another. To be without persecution should put us in serious doubt as to whether we are right. The spirit of the gospel is in absolute disagreement with the spirit of the world. But, whatever the losses and trials, let the children of God abide in the things which they have learned, and walk in blameless purity and consistency. The conduct, purpose, and patience of this great and holy Apostle gleam in front of us for our inspiration and guidance; and his experience will be ours—that there is no sorrow out of which we shall not be delivered, when we have learned the lesson it was sent to teach.

In the stern experiences of human life there is no stay that is comparable to the Holy Scriptures. The infinite variety of Scripture adapts itself to different states of the soul. Whatever our need, we can find its solace and remedy here. Thus we may live a complete life, finding in the Bible an equipment for all our emergencies. In this armory is every weapon for offense and defense; in this pharmacopœia is a medicine and antidote for every wound.

8. The Victor's Final Charge.

2 Timothy 4:1-12. To the end Paul held to the appearing of Jesus, though he might not live to see it; and it was to precede and usher in the coming of the Kingdom. The world of that time was sad and sick, and Paul's sole panacea was the preaching of the gospel. Verse 2, do not only take opportunities, but

make them. Verse 3, make haste; such opportunities are closing in. *Sound* throughout these Pastoral Epistles means "healthy" and "health-giving." Note that striking phrase of the *itching ears*, which turn in every direction where they may obtain momentary relief. Verse 5, be on the alert! *Fulfil*, that is, work to the edge of your pattern.

With what pathetic words Paul refers to his approaching death! He regarded his life-blood as about to be poured out as a libation, v. 6, R.V., margin. The time had come for him to go on board the good ship which was waiting in the offing to sail at sunset for its port of glory. He was a veteran who had fought valiantly and successfully—keeping the faith as in the old Roman story the heroes kept the bridge. But he was soon to be relieved. The crown at the end of the course was already in sight. He was lonely—*only Luke is with me*. He needed to be ministered unto—*take Mark*. But his courage was unabated. Demas might forsake, but Christ failed not.

9. "The Lord Stood by Me."

2 *Timothy* 4:13-22. The winter was approaching, and the Apostle would be glad of his cloak amid the damp of the Mamertine prison. Evidently his arrest under Nero's orders had been so sudden and peremptory that he was not allowed to go into his lodgings for this and other possessions, such as the books mentioned in v. 13.

He had made his first appearance before Nero, and was expecting a further appearance to receive his sentence. But the Lord was with him, and his comfort was that he had proclaimed the gospel to the highest audience in the world of his time. His one thought always was that the gospel should be heard by men, whether they would hear or forbear. If that were secured, he did not count the cost to himself. The *lion* may stand for Nero or Satan. See Luke 22:31; 1 Pet.

5:8. From v. 20 we gather that miraculous gifts of healing, of which Paul was possessed, may not be used merely for friendship's sake, but only where the progress of the gospel requires them.

(For Review Questions see next page.)

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY

OUTLINE.

- (a) What is the Apostle's charge to Timothy?
- (b) What is his testimony regarding his own career?
- (c) What does he say about their Master and ours?

INTRODUCTION.

- (d) What place does this Epistle occupy among the Pauline writings?
- (e) Where was it written? Under what conditions?
- (f) What was the Apostle's one desire at this time?
- (g) What characteristics distinguish the Epistle?

SECTIONS 1-9. CHAPTERS 1-4.

(Each question applies to the paragraph of corresponding number in the Comments.)

1. Why was Paul so desirous of seeing Timothy once more?
2. Why had Paul been forsaken by many of his former friends? Whom does he mention in particular as standing loyally by him?
3. In what ways is a Christian like a soldier? an athlete?
4. How may one attain the position of "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed"?
5. What is the seal of "the firm foundation of God"?
6. What will characterize the last days?
7. What is still the lot of those who "would live godly in Christ Jesus"?
8. In what terms does Paul sum up his career as an Apostle?
9. What are some of the personal allusions with which the Epistle closes?

VII
THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

SALUTATION	1:1-4.
1. <i>The Character of a Bishop</i>	1:5-10.
2. <i>Those Who Need Reproof</i>	1:11-16.
3. <i>Training the Church To Be Zealous of</i> <i>Good Works</i>	2.
4. <i>The Christian Motive</i>	3:1-11.
5. <i>Personal Matters</i>	3:12-14.
CONCLUSION	3:15.

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

We know very little of Titus. Though never mentioned in the Acts, he seems to have been one of the most trusted and best beloved members of the noble little band of Paul's friends and disciples. As he was a Greek by birth, Paul took him to Jerusalem on that memorable visit referred to in Gal. 2:3. The bond between them was very close, Titus 1:4. Titus was sent three times to Corinth on special embassies, during the troubles of that distracted church, 2 Cor. 7 and 8. The last mention of him is in connection with the visit to Dalmatia, during Paul's second imprisonment, 2 Tim. 4:10.

This Epistle guides Titus in the right ordering of the churches in Crete, which may have owed their foundation to the Cretan Jews, who are mentioned as having heard Peter's pentecostal sermon. Paul had evidently visited the island himself, but had been obliged to leave the consolidation of the work with his friend, Titus 1:5. The Epistle was warmly admired by Luther, who says: "This is a short Epistle, but it contains such a quintessence of Christian doctrine, and is composed in such a masterly manner, that it contains all that is needful for Christian knowledge and life."

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

1. Appoint Fit Men over the Churches.

Titus 1:1-9. God's elect are known by their faith, and wherever they hear the voice of truth, which makes for godliness, they recognize and acknowledge it. They are also inspired by a great hope, and that hope cannot be disappointed, because it is founded on the promise and oath of the God who cannot lie, Heb. 6:19. God's promise for us has been in his heart from all eternity, but it was hidden until the gospel was proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit. The germ-thought of eternity has been realized in Jesus and is unfolded in the gospel. Note the frequent recurrence in this Epistle of the phrase, *God our Saviour*.

The ordering of these early churches was very important. The presiding officers must be godly and consistent men, and able to commend the gospel by their lives. These natural traits of a holy man should be pondered and appropriated by us all; and we must all hold fast to the Word of God, which has been found trustworthy by countless myriads. Many are the seducing voices in the present day that counsel slackening faith and relaxing grasp.

"If all the wiles that men devise beset our faith with treacherous art,
We'll call them vanity and lies, and bind the gospel to our heart."

2. Reprove Those Whose Works Deny God.

Titus 1:10-16. The Judaizing teachers, who insisted that men must become Jews before they could be Christians, were always on Paul's heels, visiting his churches and diverting his converts from the simplicity of the faith. Their motive in many cases was very largely self-aggrandizement. Such men were to be re-

sisted to the uttermost and sharply rebuked. Where the work of grace is really commenced in the heart, a sharp rebuke will often turn the soul back to God. The gardener must not hesitate to use a pruning-knife, if the well-being of the tree is at stake.

Note the marvelous power we possess of viewing things in the light or gloom cast upon them from our own temperament. We see life and the world in a glass colored from within. Oh, that we might possess that pure and untarnished nature that passes through the world like a beam of sunshine, irradiating all but contaminated by none! The true test of the knowledge of God is a holy life. These act and react. The better you know God, the more you will resemble him; compare Psalms 111 and 112. The more you are like God, the better you will know him.

3. A Pattern for Old and Young.

Titus 2:1-8. The supreme test of all Christian teaching and Christian work depends on whether they produce healthy characters, which are not contaminated by the noisome and germ-laden atmosphere around. Our teaching must be healthy and also health-creating. There must be plenty of ozone in it.

The Apostle's strophes are few but fine. In the briefest sentences he seizes the salient features of Christian character. The aged man—strong, calm, patient, full of faith and love. The aged woman—holy, reverent, beloved, honored, and obeyed by the younger women of the same household or church. So also with the young men and women. What a life is sketched here against which the tongue of slander is dumb!

But, after all, these results cannot be realized apart from the personal holiness of their minister and leader. He must furnish a pattern of good works. His attitude to things which are questionable and doubtful must be decided not by his own predilections or fancies, but by the consideration of the effect which his

action is likely to have on the keen eyes that are carefully watching him.

4. How We May "Adorn the Doctrine."

Titus 2:9-15. The servants addressed in this tender and priceless paragraph were household slaves, employed in the most menial drudgery, but they were taught that even they might adorn the Gospel as jewels adorn the brow of beauty. Their holy lives might display and set forth its loveliness. To please one's superiors, in all things so far as our loyalty to Christ permits, is to commend Christ to our households, and win his approval. The grace of God has ever offered salvation, but in Jesus it was brought to our doors. In its first appearance, it came to teach; in its second appearance, it will bring us glory. Have we sat sufficiently long in the school of grace, that our gentle Teacher may instruct us how to live? It must be *soberly* in regard to ourselves, *righteously* toward others, and *godly* toward God. And we cannot realize any one of these unless we resolutely deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. This was the aim and purpose of Jesus in coming to die for us. He wanted to redeem us from all iniquity, purify us as his own, and use us in all manner of good works. It is a solemn question whether that supreme purpose has been realized in our own experience. If not, why not?

5. Making Return to God's Loving-Kindness.

Titus 3:1-7. Throughout this Epistle, the Apostle insists on good works. See 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14. The word *good* might be rendered *beautiful*. We must not work to be saved, but being saved we must be *ready* to every good work, and careful to *maintain* good works. In this last phrase the Apostle apparently refers to the trades and callings by which his converts were to earn their daily bread.

What singular beauty there is in this allusion to

the appearance of *the kindness and love of God our Saviour!* These appeared in the person of Jesus, whose human nature alternately veiled and revealed them. The full outshining of God's love was curtained by the veil of his humanity, but enough was shown to irradiate the life of humanity, if only men's eyes had not been blind. Paul speaks of the *laver* of regeneration, v. 5, R.V., margin, because the new nature, which we receive when we are born again, is clean, and cleanses the entire life from within outward. This is the result of the daily renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom God is ever pouring richly into our hearts. Is this your experience? Will you not claim an ever-increasing inflow? You have been born again; then, as an heir, enter upon the double portion of the first-born, v. 7.

6. Maintaining Good Works.

Titus 3:8-15. It is wise advice that we should try to shun controversy and disputations. Small benefit accrues from such methods of advancing the truth. After all, the Lord's test is the true one for all teachings which are in question—What is their fruit? “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Let us, therefore, cultivate the grace and beauty, the righteousness and purity, of a holy life. Let us yield ourselves to Jesus to be wholly possessed and used by him; and let our one aim be to get glory for him and success for his Kingdom. Then our views of truth will become clear and sound, and the beauty of our lives will have the most convincing effect on gainsayers. It is better to live a holy life than be a successful disputant. The best proof of orthodoxy is a Christlike life.

Paul, having been liberated from his first imprisonment, was itinerating in Asia Minor and Macedonia, accompanied by several friends. He was intending to winter at Nicopolis in Epirus, and was about to send Artemas or Tychicus to relieve Titus in Crete, so that

Titus might join him in the winter sojourn. These plans were probably canceled by his own sudden arrest at Nero's instigation.

(For Review Questions see next page.)

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE EPISTLE TO TITUS

OUTLINE.

- (a) What is the theme of this Epistle?
- (b) In which chapter is the theme most prominent?

INTRODUCTION.

- (c) What facts regarding Titus come to light in the Pauline Epistles?
- (d) Where was Titus when he received this Epistle?
With what purpose was it written?
- (e) What is Luther's testimony to this Epistle?

SECTIONS 1-6. CHAPTERS 1-3.

(Each question applies to the paragraph of corresponding number in the Comments.)

1. Why had Paul left Titus in Crete?
2. What is the true test of the knowledge of God?
3. How may Christians disarm their enemies?
4. What were the Apostle's instructions to servants?
5. What is the one basis of salvation?
6. What is the one fruit of salvation? What are some of the personal references in the concluding paragraph?

VIII
THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

A PLEA FOR A RUNAWAY SLAVE

SALUTATION	1-3.
1. <i>Paul's Prayer for His Friend</i>	4-7.
2. <i>The Return of Onesimus</i>	8-14.
3. <i>The Significance of His Absence</i>	15, 16.
4. <i>Paul's Offer of Security</i>	17-20.
CONCLUSION	21-25.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

The Epistle of Paul to Philemon is unique in that it is addressed to a personal friend regarding a private matter. No doubt Paul wrote many such personal letters but this one alone has been preserved.

Philemon seems to have been a wealthy citizen of Colosse. He was a personal convert of the Apostle's and there were strong bonds of friendship between them.

Paul writes on behalf of a thief and a runaway. Philemon had suffered serious loss through the irregular conduct of his servant Onesimus, and might well be hesitant about trusting him again. Paul sees that it is the duty of the slave to return and of his master to receive him. By personal persuasion he had won over Onesimus to return, and by this letter he seeks to insure for him a welcome in his master's house. Onesimus goes back, not merely as a penitent but as a Christian. Paul pleads that he be received as a brother.

The Epistle was written from Rome, the natural center of attraction for all fugitives, and is associated with the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians.



“PAUL THE AGED.” Philemon 9.

From Painting by REMBRANDT. Dutch Artist.

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON

1. A Plea for the Returning Slave.

Philemon 1:1-14. Onesimus had known the Apostle well in the old days when Paul visited at the house of his master Philemon, who seems to have been a man of importance. His house was large enough to admit of a church assembling in it, and to accommodate the Apostle and his traveling companions when they came to the city. Apphia, his wife, was also a Christian, and Archippus, their son, was engaged in some kind of Christian work in connection with the infant Christian community which they were nursing. Compare vs. 1 and 2 with Col. 4:17. It is beautiful to observe the Apostle's humility in associating these obscure people with himself as fellow-workers.

Onesimus had been a runaway slave, and fleeing to Rome, had been converted by the ministry of Paul—*whom I have begotten in my bonds*. The converted slave had become very dear and useful to his benefactor, vs. 12, 13. The Apostle now sends him back to his former owner with this letter, pleading that he be once more received into the household of Philemon.

2. To Be Received as a Brother.

Philemon 1:15-25. The Apostle's pleas for the restoration of Onesimus to his old trusted position in the household of Philemon are very touching. He suggests, first, that there may have been a divine purpose in it all, and that the former's flight had been permitted as a step in the entire renovation of the slave's nature. And, therefore, because Philemon and Onesimus were two Christians, their relationship had been transformed. "In the flesh, Philemon has the brother for his slave; in the Lord, Philemon has the slave for his brother." Then in v. 17 Paul identifies

himself with Onesimus; and we are taught to think of our Lord identifying himself with us, because, as Luther says, "we are all Onesimuses." Further, in v. 18 Paul offers to assume all the losses which Onesimus had brought on Philemon, and signs the bond with his autograph, as our Lord paid the great ransom price for us all. Finally, Paul delicately reminds his friend, in v. 19, that Philemon owed him a great deal more than a trifle of money, namely, his spiritual life. Does not our Lord address us in similar terms? We surely owe ourselves to him!

(Owing to the brevity of this Epistle Review Questions are omitted.)

IX
THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

THE NEW AND BETTER COVENANT

- I. CHRIST THE SURETY OF THE NEW COVE-
NANT1:1—5:10.
 1. *He Is a Divine Redeemer*1:1-4.
 2. *He Is Superior to Angels*1:5-14.
 3. *He Has Accomplished Redemption
through Suffering*2.
 4. *He Is Greater than Moses*3:1—4:13.
 5. *He Is a Great High Priest*4:14—5:10.
 - (*Comment on the Argument and Direct
Appeal to Readers*5:11—6:12.)
- II. THE RELATION OF THE TWO COVE-
NANTS6:13—10:39.
 1. *The Promise to Abraham*6:13-15.
 2. *Its Realization by Us*6:16-20.
 3. *The Unchanging Priesthood*.....7:1-17.
 4. *The Covenants Contrasted*7:18—8:13.
 5. *The Institutions of the Old Cove-
nant Fulfilled in the Person and
Work of Christ*9:1—10:18.
 6. *The Greater Privileges and Respon-
sibilities of the New Covenant*...10:19-39.
- III. FAITH, THE COMMON FACTOR OF THE
TWO COVENANTS11—12.
 1. *The Achievements of Faith under
the Old Covenant*11.
 2. *The Summons to Faith under the
New Covenant*12.
- IV. PRACTICAL ADMONITIONS13:1-21.
- CONCLUSION13:22-25.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

This Epistle was evidently written as the ancient Hebrew economy was passing away in the growing glory of the Christian Church. Perhaps Jerusalem had already fallen under the arms of Titus. It was addressed to Hebrew Christians, who were settled in a definite locality. See 13:23. The writer is not certainly known. Luther thought that it was written by Apollos, and this view has had several learned advocates. But many ascribe it to the Apostle Paul, which was the opinion of the early Fathers. The object of this noble treatise is to counsel those to whom it was addressed to bear their persecutions with equanimity, and to forego, with contentment, the external attractions of the Temple service, because of the transcendent glories of Christianity surpassing those of the Mosaic ritual. The penalties of apostasy would therefore be the more terrible as the claims of Christianity were the more compelling.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

1. God's Final and Supreme Messenger.

Hebrews 1:1-14. Christianity is greater than the Mosaic dispensation because it has been given through the Son, whereas the Law came through angels. See Acts 7:53. The message of the Gospel is connected speech; that of the Law was broken syllables.

The Son's intrinsic glory, vs. 1-4. Jesus is the channel of creation, providence and redemption. He is the far-traveled ray of Deity; but not one among many equals, for of him alone could it be said that his nature was co-extensive with God's, as a seal with the die. He is on the throne, not merely because of his original nature, but as the reward of his obedience unto death, Phil. 2:9.

His superiority to angels, vs. 5-14. These quotations should be carefully studied as showing the deep inner meaning of the Psalms. Their fulfillment must be sought in Christ, and in them we overhear the voice of God. We must ever thank God for the ministry of angels. Note that their service to us is a liturgy of adoration to God;—such is the force of the Greek words.

2. The Author of Our Salvation.

Hebrews 2:1-9. Drifting away, vs. 1-4. The R.V. gives this solemn rendering. Unless we watch, the strong currents of the world will drift us away from God's great harbor of Salvation; and sins against his offered love are even more to be dreaded than those under the ancient Law. To *neglect* is the equivalent of to *reject*. Notice in v. 4 how God co-operates with his messengers. See John 15:27; Acts 5:32.

Jesus crowned, vs. 5-9. How can Jesus be greater than angels? He did for man what they could not do. It is through his death that humanity may be lifted to a supreme position in the universe of being. Man

failed to realize his original *magna charta* in Gen. 1:26; but the divine purpose could not be frustrated, and there was a needs-be for the manger, the Cross and the Ascension mount. As we look around, Psalm 8 seems a mockery; as we look up, we discover in Jesus the psalmist's dream more than realized. They who are one with him will share his glory and honor.

3. "Made Like unto His Brethren."

Hebrews 2:10-18. Captain reminds us of Acts 3:15. It means *file-leader*. The Church follows its Leader, Jesus Christ, in single file through this world, the cross and the grave, to the glory. But notice that God himself is engaged in bringing us through; and he cannot lose one. See John 10:29. But he is not only our Captain, he is our Brother. We also are born of God. He is sanctifying us and we are being sanctified for a marvelous future, John 17:19. How great is his love, that he is not ashamed of us!

Our Elder Brother has encountered our foes, and won deliverance for all who believe. Death remains, but its teeth are drawn and its power is annulled. We need not fear what men call death; to us it is only as falling asleep. He has taken hold of us with a grasp that will never let us go again, v. 16. He has been tempted that he might be able to succor us in our temptations. He has suffered that he might tread our darkened paths at our side. He has made reconciliation for our sins, and as our merciful and faithful High Priest, pleads the cause of our souls.

4. Superior to Moses.

Hebrews 3:1-11. Dwell on those opening words:—*holy*, such is God's ideal for us; *brethren*, by reason of our union with Christ, and with one another in him; *partakers*, etc., God is ever calling upward and heavenward. Jesus comes from God as *Apostle* and goes for us to God as *Priest*. In his human life, how humble and faithful; but he originally built the Jewish polity

and commonwealth! He was and is as much greater than Moses as the architect than the foreman and the son than the servant.

It is not enough to *begin* the Christian race; we must hold fast our confidence and hope to the end. That was the point specially to be emphasized among these harried people. These Hebrew Christians missed the splendid ceremonial of their ancient faith, and were suffering heavily from persecution and opposition. But was it not worth while to persevere, if only to be recognized as belonging to the household of God? Surely for them and for us the experiences of Israel in the forty years of wandering are full of warning. Be admonished by that Wilderness cemetery!

5. "Harden Not Your Hearts."

Hebrews 3:12-19. There is a peril lest familiarity with God's words should beget indifference to them. The path may be trodden hard by the sower's feet. That story of the Wilderness wanderings is for all time. Still men disbelieve and disobey; still they doubt that God is able; still they err in their hearts and therefore fail to understand with their heads; still they wander to and fro, with weary souls and restless feet. But if they who failed to believe in words given by Moses were wrapped around by the winding sheets of sand, what will not be the fate of those who refuse the words of Christ!

How wonderful it is that by just trusting we may be partners with our Lord of his rest, life, glory and resources, v. 14! But we must listen to the inner voice, soft and low speaking in the Horeb of our hearts, 1 Kings 19:12. Obey it, and you will enter into the rest of God; refuse it, and you will be as certainly excluded from the divine rest as they from Canaan.

6. The Rest That Joshua Could Not Give.

Hebrews 4:1-10. The good news of Canaan's rest was preached to Israel but availed nothing, because the

hearers were destitute of faith. They said, *Can God?* instead of, *God can!* They thought of their enemies as giants and themselves as grasshoppers, because they left God out of account. Take God into account and we are giants and our enemies grasshoppers.

To all of us Christ offers *rest*, not in the other life only, but in this. See vs. 3 and 11. Rest from the weight of sin, from care and worry, from the load of daily anxiety and foreboding. The rest that arrives from handing all worries over to Christ, and receiving from Christ all we need. Have we entered into that experience? In vs. 6 and 11, where A.V. reads, "unbelief," R.V., reads, "disobedience." If we disobey, we cannot believe; but when we believe we are sure to obey. In v. 10 we are directed to our risen Lord, who has finished the work of Redemption and rests, as God did when he pronounced Creation to be "very good." When we understand what he meant by "It is finished," we, too, shall rest.

7. Entered by Faith and Prayer.

Hebrews 4:11-16. There is no escape for disobedience and unbelief, because we have to do with the omniscience of God. The conception of vs. 12 and 13 is of a victim appointed for sacrifice and thrown upon its back, that the keen edge of the knife may do its work more readily. The divine scrutiny is still sharper. There is so much of the *soul* in what we do, that is, of our opinions and activities. God distinguishes between these and those promptings of his Spirit which are really important and influential. Only what is born of the Spirit will stand the test of eternity!

Shall we not fail in that scrutiny? Will he not detect in us that evil heart of unbelief? We need not fear; because our High Priest has passed the veil that hides the invisible and eternal and has entered the divine presence. "Mercy and grace to help in time of need!" These will meet our supreme needs—mercy for our sins, grace for our helplessness and frailty.

8. Our Divinely Appointed High Priest.

Hebrews 5:1-10. Having to act for men, our High Priest must be man, acquainted with human conditions; having to do with God, he must be appointed by God. Is there one of us that is not conscious of liability to ignorance and wandering? We all evermore need the high priesthood of Jesus.

The Aaronic priests must needs make atonement for themselves, but our Lord was without sin. See Lev. 4:3. Verse 5 has reference to his resurrection and ascension. See Rom. 1:4; Acts 13:33. His priestly service dates from the completion of his mediatorial work on the Cross. No scene in our Lord's life fulfills v. 7 like that of the Garden, when it seemed impossible for the human body to hold out under the stress of his anguish. He feared that he would succumb before he reached Calvary. He had to yield obedience unto death in order to learn what obedience really means. Thus as to his humanity he became perfected; and if only we believe and obey, he will effect a perfect deliverance for us from all evil. There is no sin so strong, no need so intricate, that he cannot cope with it.

9. "Press on unto Full Growth."

Hebrews 5:11—6:8. The teacher has to suit his pace to his scholars. How much we miss because we are such inapt pupils! Milk is food which has passed through another's digestion. Many cannot get their spiritual nutrition direct from God's Word, but have to live on what others have obtained and have passed on in speech or book. Seek a first-hand acquaintance with the things of God. We grow by feeding and exercise.

We must leave the first principles, as a builder leaves the foundation; he is never so much on it as when farthest above it. The third and fourth principles, v. 2, are the Jewish equivalents of the first and second, v. 1. Notice the R.V. marginal reading for *seeing* in v. 6—"the while." So long as men continue to tread

the love of God under foot, they cannot repent and be restored. The failure, as with unproductive soil, is not on account of a failure of heaven, but because the soil is hard and obdurate. If we are unproductive, it is due to our own hard-heartedness.

10. "The Hope Set before Us."

Hebrews 6:9-20. The keynote of this passage is *patient continuance*. We should seek not only faith but its accompaniments. It is not enough to manifest faith, hope and love, but to continue to do so *unto the end*. Notice that the two conditions on which the promises are inherited are faith and patience.

These truths are enforced by the example of Abraham. He believed God and patiently endured. Your prayers cannot be lost, as ships at sea; they will make harbor at last, laden with golden freight. God's promise and oath are a double door, behind which they who have fled for refuge are safe—a double window beyond which all noise dies down. The allusion is either to the cities of refuge, or to a ship safely riding out the storm. Hope is *sure*, because the anchor has fastened in a sure ground; *steadfast*, because its cable will not snap in the strain; and *entering*, etc., because it unites us to the unseen. Jesus has taken our anchor into the inner harbor, and has dropped it down into the clear, still water there.

11. A Priesthood Superior to Aaron's.

Hebrews 7:1-10. Melchizedek was probably a literal king and priest in Salem. The blue smoke of his sacrifices rose morning and evening on the hill. Amid the turbulent lawlessness of those wild days, his realm was peace. Like him, Jesus meets us when flushed with success or wearied with some great effort, and therefore peculiarly liable to temptation. Notice the order! It is invariable! First righteousness, then peace, Zech. 9:9.

The silences of Scripture are significant. In the

case of this ancient priesthood no mention is made of parenthood. This was a matter of comparative indifference. So with our Lord. It is true that he did not come of the priestly family of Aaron, but this is quite unimportant. The one thing for us to notice is that Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, thus confessing him to be the greater. Levi was, so to speak, included in his grandfather's act, so that the Hebrew priesthood, which sprang from Levi, was confessedly inferior to Melchizedek's. If, then, Melchizedek is a type of Christ, we are taught that Christ's priesthood is evidently and eternally superior to all other priesthoods whatsoever.

12. Our Ever-Living and All-Sufficient Intercessor.

Hebrews 7:11-28. If, as we saw in our last reading, the Levitical priests have been superseded, clearly the whole order of things—that is, the Mosaic covenant under which these priests were appointed—has been superseded also. The law of the carnal—that is, the outward ritual—has passed away in favor of a new dispensation which deals with the heart and character. It served a temporary purpose, but we are living in an eternal order which is steadfast and abiding.

Our Lord's priesthood is unchangeable and indissoluble. His blood and righteousness, his mediation for us, his loving understanding of us, will be a joy and comfort in the unending ages. We shall always be specially associated with Him—the brethren of the King, the sheep of the Divine Shepherd. Each priest of Aaron's line had to vacate his office; but our Lord's priesthood will never pass to another; and therefore to the uttermost lapse of time and to the farthest demand of circumstance, he will save and help all that come to him. No infirmity weakens him, no stain or sin unfits him—above the heavens and from the throne he exercises his ministry.

13. The Mediator of the New Covenant.

Hebrews 8:1-13. Such a High Priest, vs. 1-6. He sits because his work is finished so far as his sacrifice is concerned. His place is at God's right hand—the seat of power. By faith we, too, may serve in the inner sanctuary of the spirit. Before you start building, and while engaged in building, your life-work, see that your eyes are fixed on the divine ideal and pattern.

Such a new covenant, vs. 7-13. It is as superior to the former as Christ's priesthood is to Aaron's. A covenant is a promise, made on conditions to be fulfilled, and attested by an outward sign, like the rainbow, or circumcision, or the Lord's Supper. The covenant under which we live is between God and Christ on behalf of those who belong to him. We have a perfect right to put our hand on every one of these eight provisions, and claim that each be made good to us. We need not ask that God should do as he has said, but with lowly reverence expect that he will—especially when we drink of the cup of the New Covenant at the Lord's table.

14. The Imperfect Way of Approach to God.

Hebrews 9:1-10. With careful enumeration each item of the Tabernacle furniture is specified, because of each there is a spiritual equivalent in the unseen, spiritual Temple to which we belong. The veil that screened the Most Holy Place and forbade entrance, save once a year, taught that fellowship with God was not fully open. Ignorance, unbelief, unpreparedness of heart still weave a heavy veil which screens God from the soul's gaze.

The altar of incense is here associated with the inner shrine, because it stood so near the veil. Its analogue is Rev. 8:4. The Ark was an emblem of Christ: the wood, of his humanity; the gold, of his deity. He holds the manna of the world, and is the ever-budding plant

of renown, beautiful and fruit-bearing through death. There is one gateway in St. Peter's, Rome, through which the Pope passes only once a year; how glad we may be that our gates for prayer stand open day and night! Contrast the sadness of such passages as Ps. 51: 3, 4 and Mic. 6: 6 with the joy of Eph. 1: 3-10.

15. The Blood Which Sealed the New Covenant.

Hebrews 9:11-20. We are led to consider Christ's high-priestly work. The scene for it is no edifice made with hands in this transitory world, but eternal and divine. His stay in the Holiest is not brief, hurried, and repeated year by year, but once for all he enters by virtue of his own blood. That blood cleanses not only from ceremonial guilt, but from moral and spiritual pollution. A will or testament comes into force when the testator dies; so the will of the eternal Father toward us has been made valid through the blood of Jesus.

Consider, then, *the Eternal or Timeless Spirit*. What Jesus did on the Cross was the doing of God through his Spirit. The Atonement was not wrought by the dying Sufferer to appease God, but to express God as reconciling the world to himself. *The Timeless Cross*. It belongs to no one age, but "towers o'er the wrecks of time," and is as near us as to the early Church. *The Timeless Christ*. Cast yourself out of yourself and into him; out of the fret of the time-sphere into the freedom and ecstasy of the eternal!

16. The One Sacrifice That Puts Away Sin.

Hebrews 9:21-28. Here are the *three appearances* of Christ: (1) *He appeared* once, at the ridge or meeting-place of the ages—where the first Covenant and the second met—to put away the sin of the race; and he has done this for each of us. We are called on to believe this and to enter upon our inheritance without questioning or trying to feel it. Men are told clearly that God will not impute their transgressions unto

them, unless they place themselves out of the at-onement by the deliberate repudiation of Christ. The one question for us all is not sin, but our attitude toward Christ, the Sin-Bearer. See 2 Cor. 5:19.

(2.) *He appears* in heaven for us, as our Intercessor and Mediator, presenting our prayers mingled with the rich incense of his merit, and acting as the ground of our beseechings, Rev. 8:3. (3) *He will appear* the second time. There will be no sin-bearing then. His appearance will be "apart from sin." But then salvation will be perfected, because creation itself will share in the liberty and glory of the sons of God, Rom. 8:21.

17. "Lo, I Come To Do Thy Will."

Hebrews 10:1-10. When a heavenly body is in eclipse it can be examined with even greater precision than when the astronomer's eye is directed toward its burning glory; so in Leviticus we can discover details of our Lord's atonement otherwise overlooked. This is notably the case in Lev. 1—4.

The keywords of this chapter are *year by year* and *day by day* as contrasted with *continually* and *forever*. Repetition means imperfection. The ancient offerers of sacrifice could never be sure that they were finally accepted. Each year they had to go over the old ground. How different from us, who have heard Jesus say, "It is finished"!

The spirit of inspiration offers to us the secret of our Saviour's work in his voluntary identification with the divine purposes. It was not so much his outward anguish and blood-shedding that made reconciliation possible, as his cry, "Not my will, my Father, but thine." His attitude reminds us of the ancient custom of boring fast to the door the ear of the servant, who desired never again to leave his master's service. "Mine ears hast thou bored." See Ps. 40:6, margin.

18. The New and Living Way Open to Us.

Hebrews 10:11-25. Note the contrast between the *standing* of the *priests* and the *sitting* of the *Priest*. The one indicated incompleteness, the other a finished work. All that needed to be done for our final and entire deliverance from sin was accomplished when Jesus returned to the Father. It is for us to pass in large demands and claims. The bank is full, but we must draw on it.

It is a great help, in the study of the Old Testament, to notice how explicitly the writer here attributes to the Holy Spirit the words spoken by one of the old prophets. What a comfort it is to know that God *forgets* our sins when we have confessed and forsaken them!

The way of prayer and faith was *new*, for our Lord had just opened it; *living*, because only those alive in Christ can tread it. The rending of the Temple veil was emblematic of the open vision of God, given through Calvary. But we must be *true, believing, reliant on his death* and *pure* through his cleansing, John 13:5-8.

19. Beware of Backsliding.

Hebrews 10:26-39. The wilful sin here referred to does not consist in isolated acts, but in a determined course of action, persisted in until the very desire for a better life wanes and dies out of the soul.

These strong remonstrances were needed in those days of sore persecution. Three considerations are adduced, urging steadfastness: (1.) The certain punishment which must follow on the rejection of the greatest gifts that God can make, so much richer than anything presented under the Mosaic covenant. (2.) The sufferings already endured, the reward for which would be forfeited, if these harried souls were now to draw back. (3.) The near advent of the Christ, who would not fail to compensate his faithful servants.

Then we are reminded that the just—those who have

been accepted in the Beloved—live; that is, may derive all the reinforcements of soul strength and patience that they require, from the unseen and eternal world where Jesus waits to succor and uphold.

20. Faith's Triumphs from Abel to Abraham.

Hebrews 11:1-10. Faith is the *sixth* sense. It makes us as sure of unseen or future things, which we know about only through the divine Word, as we are of things which we can see and touch. When we are aware of the reality of these things, we naturally take them into account when we act. Rothschild laid the foundation of his fortune because he had news that the battle of Waterloo had been won, a day before anyone else in Britain. That fact enabled him to buy up all the depressed money-shares, which rose with marvelous buoyancy as soon as the news was universally disseminated. Faith does this for us!

Noah built the ark because he believed that the flood would befall. Abraham left his country because he realized that Canaan would be his. The pilgrims and martyrs of all the ages have been derided by their companions, who would have acted similarly if only they had looked with faith into the unseen. And God never fails such. He always bears witness with his gifts.

21. Seeking the Better Country.

Hebrews 11:11-22. Faith has the twofold power, first, of making the unseen real; and second, of receiving the grace and strength of God into the heart. Sarah, through faith, received strength to bear Isaac. By faith may come physical as well as spiritual strength.

The pilgrim life is possible only for those who have seen the city of God beckoning them from afar. Then they strike their tents and follow the gleam. By faith they so comport themselves that God is not ashamed to own them. They will discover, even in this life, that

they have not trusted him in vain, and that the half has not been told. On the mere rumor that a new gold field is found, men sell off everything in their mad rush. How many are disappointed! But none of those that trust God shall be left desolate.

Abraham was absolutely sure that Isaac would return with him, even though the lad might die beneath the knife. When leaving the young men at Moriah's foot, he said: "We will worship and come again." Had not God's voice definitely designated Isaac as his heir?

22. Making the Far-Seeing Choice.

Hebrews 11:23-31. Faith—we cannot say it too often—is the direct vision of the soul. It doesn't reason, it doesn't ask for evidences, it doesn't seek the corroboration of spies sent forward to explore the land. It is to the spiritual world what the five senses are to things around us. It is even more than this; it is our power of deriving the help of the Unseen to carry out and complete the work of our life.

Moses *saw* him who is invisible, and *drew* on God with a mighty faith that reckoned on him as being more real than Pharaoh, and secured his divine co-operation. First, he ascertained God's will at the place where the bush burned with fire; and then set about doing his part, depending upon God to do his. Of course, it brought him into collision with the whole might of Pharaoh and Egypt, but he didn't even fear it. The destroying Angel had no terrors for the blood-sheltered people. The waters lined up on each side to let them pass. Strongly built walls fell to the ground. Let us be sure that we are on the line of God's purposes, then trust him and fear naught.

23. "The Noble Army of Martyrs."

Hebrews 11:32-40. Strong faith is consistent with very different views of religious truth. The conception that Abel, Enoch or Noah had of so-called Christian truth was very slight; but the faith with which they

grasped the scanty truth revealed to them was mighty, soul-transforming and world-moving.

Walk through this long corridor of statuary. These persons were of every age and temperament; shepherds, statesmen, prime ministers, psalmists, poets, border chieftains, prophets, women martyrs—but they are all trophies of faith. The variety is extraordinary, but the unity is undeniable. The beads are many, but there is one golden thread uniting them all. Their circumstances and trials were widely different, but in all the talisman of victory was faith's watchword—*God is able*. There is no kind of need, trial, persecution, experience, for which faith is not the sufficient answer. It is the master key for every lock of difficulty. Fit your case into one of the clauses and what once was, shall be again.

24. Persistently Press Forward.

Hebrews 12:1-8. In one of Raphael's pictures the clouds, when looked at minutely, are seen to be composed of little cherub-faces; and those who have already witnessed and suffered for God gather around us as a great cloud, like the crowded amphitheaters in the old Olympian games. We are still in the arena; probably every blow and sigh are beheld and heard by the general assembly and church of the firstborn. What an incentive to lay aside all "cumbrances"; that is, whatever in your life may be a hindrance, though hardly a sin! But above all, we must put away the sin of unbelief, which we can best do by looking unto Jesus.

The word *our* should certainly be eliminated in v. 2. Jesus began and finished his life-career by the same faith—"the faith of the Son of God"—which each of his children has to exercise. The light beyond the Cross beckoned to him and so enamored him that he counted no cost too dear, if only he might realize the possibilities that gleamed before his vision, of an elect church and a transformed world.

25. Endure Chastening; Seek Holiness.

Hebrews 12:9-17. If we are God's children, we will not look on suffering as a punishment. Chastening it may be, but not the penalty of sin. It is administered by our Father. Don't look at the intermediary links in the chain, but remember that Satan could not go beyond the Father's limit in the case of Balaam or Job. See Num. 22:31; Job 2:6. It is only for the present; it will soon be over; it is intended to free us of dross and is therefore to profit; it will yield peace, and righteousness, and true holiness. Look on and up—the harvest will repay.

We are bidden, vs. 14-17, to watch each other's interests and to stay the first speck of corruption in the fruit, lest it spread. The corrupt soul infects all in its neighborhood. There are irrevocable acts in life. We cannot undo them, but we may be forgiven. Esau received all that this world could give and became a prince, but he never got back his spiritual leadership.

26. Hearken to God's Latest Word.

Hebrews 12:18-29. Sinai rocked with earthquake and burned with fire. None might touch it without incurring the death penalty. How much better our Christian heritage! Not a lonely mountain, but a city and commonwealth of holy souls. Not bands of worshipers gathered from the land of Canaan, but hosts of angels, the spirits of just men, and our blessed Lord himself. For the blood of animals, the blood of Jesus; for the Old Covenant, the New; for Abel's death beside his altar, the Saviour's death on the cross.

Notice the writer does not say that we *shall*, but that we *are* come, v. 22. Already, in our holiest moments, we are part of that great throng to which so many of our beloved have gone. Around us the most stable structures are being tested and some are crumbling to the ground. As they fall they show that their service

was transient. But as the scaffolding is taken down, the true building—the City of God—emerges.

27. Sanctify Daily Life.

Hebrews 13:1-13. We may not like *all* the brethren, but there is something in each of them that Christ loves. Let us try to discover it, or love them for his sake. We can love people with our *mind* and think for them, or with our *strength* and serve them, even though the *heart* is somewhat reluctant.

Strangers and captives must never be forgotten, either in our prayers or our ministry. The love within the marriage tie must be unsullied, and we must watch against the insidious lust of gold. Why should we always be thinking of money, when God has promised, with two negatives, never to fail us, v. 5? Thrice we are asked to remember those who bear office and rule in the church, vs. 7, 17, 24.

We are called to a holy crusade. It is not for us to linger in circumstances of ease and self-indulgence when our Master suffered without the gate! Let us go forth unto him, bearing his reproach! Has not the Church tarried in the city long enough, enervated by its fashions and flatteries?

28. Praise, Prayer, and Peace.

Hebrews 13:14-25. Notice that though the ancient sacrifices have been abolished, there is one which can never grow old—the *sacrifice of praise*. This incense must ever ascend from the heart-altar. And to this we must add the sacrifices of doing good and distributing our goods.

Perfection in the closing paragraph, v. 21, means adjustment, the setting of a dislocated bone. We may be in the body of which Jesus is the Head, and yet be out of touch with him. We need setting; and this is work which God will delegate to no angel, however exalted. He will do it himself as tenderly and gently as possible, because he is the *God of peace*. Do you

doubt it? Did he not bring the Shepherd to glory, and is he not able to bring the sheep also? Never rest until you are in living organic union with Jesus, that he may be able to work his will through you to your own great joy and for the hastening of the Kingdom.

(For Review Questions see next page.)

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

OUTLINE.

- (a) What is the theme of this Epistle?
- (b) What are the two parts of the third division?

INTRODUCTION.

- (c) When was this Epistle written?
- (d) To whom was it addressed?
- (e) What was the writer's purpose?

SECTIONS 1-28. CHAPTERS 1-13

(Each question applies to the paragraph of corresponding number in the Comments.)

1. Who is God's final and supreme messenger?
2. For whom is Christ's saving work intended?
3. How is Christ able to help those who are tempted?
4. Why is Christ counted worthy of more glory than Moses?
5. Why were the children of Israel denied entrance to the Land of Promise? What is the application to us?
6. What is the rest which Christ affords?
7. What encouragement have we to come to the throne of grace?
8. Of what order is Christ's priesthood? How did He learn obedience?
9. What are the stages of growth in Christian discipleship? What is the penalty of falling away?
10. By what two immutable things have we strong consolation?
11. Who was Melchizedek? How is he a type of Christ?
12. How is Christ able to save to the uttermost?
13. How did the New Covenant take the place of the Old?
14. What was the furniture of the Tabernacle?
15. How is the sacrifice of Christ related to the sacrifices under the Old Covenant?

16. What is the present work of Christ?
17. How is the Christian sanctified?
18. To what does the blood of Christ secure an entrance for us?
19. What will be the reward of patience and steadfastness?
20. What is faith? How was it exemplified by Abel? by Enoch? by Noah?
21. What was the supreme trial of Abraham's faith?
22. How was the faith of Moses exhibited?
23. In what does the victory of faith consist?
24. How may the Christian life be compared to a race?
25. What are the benefits of chastisement?
26. What are the present privileges of the Christian?
27. What is our duty toward strangers and captives?
28. Give the benediction in the closing section of the Epistle.

X

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

THE MEASURE OF A CHRISTIAN

SALUTATION	1:1.
1. <i>Tested Character</i>	1:2-18.
2. <i>Hearing and Doing</i>	1:19-27.
3. <i>The Hypocrisy of Class Distinctions</i> ...	2:1-13.
4. <i>The Evidence of True Faith</i>	2:14-26.
5. <i>The Unruly Tongue</i>	3.
6. <i>The Grace of Humility</i>	4.
7. <i>The Curse of Ill-Gotten Wealth</i>	5:1-6.
8. <i>The Need of Patience and Prayer</i>	5:7-20.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

The author of this Epistle was probably the Lord's brother, mentioned with Joses, Simon and Judah, and often in the Acts of the Apostles. See Mark 6:3; Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18. He was bishop, or president, of the church at Jerusalem, and this letter was probably written from that city. The emphasis laid on the nearness of our Lord's advent points to a date near A.D. 70. The Epistle may have been written in Hebrew, and was addressed to the Hebrew section of the Church. It lays great emphasis on the sublime ideal of character which Christianity had raised, and to maintain which demanded the constant diligence of all professing Christians.

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

1. Steadfast Faith.

James 1:1-11. This Epistle is marked by the austere features of the Jerusalem church, which refused to be affected by that wider contact with the Gentile world, by which the life and teachings of St. Paul were so powerfully influenced. "Brother to Jesus" was the designation that James might have used, but he preferred the more modest title of *bond-servant*. The slaves of such a king are nobles! The times were full of severe testing. Each believer had to face ignominy, loss and death for his testimony to Jesus and his saving power. But James encourages these harried souls by the immense revenues that would accrue, more especially in the acquisition of patience. While patience is drawn out almost to the breaking-point, God is developing our characters with perfect beauty, so that no side is incomplete.

There are three urgent requirements for us all: (1) Wisdom to act and speak wisely in the hour of trial; (2) faith that refuses to respond to the surging billows of doubt; (3) humility and contentment with God's dealings.

2. God Rewards, Not Tempts.

James 1:12-18. The word *temptation* may stand for trial and testing, without implying that there is any necessary impulse toward evil; or it may stand for the direct impulse of the evil one. Here, however, it is used in this latter sense. But of whatever kind the temptation is, whether upward or downward, whether of pain and sorrow at the permission of God, or of direct solicitation to evil at the suggestion of Satan, those who refuse to swerve from their high quest of nobility attain to higher levels of life. In the words

of this paragraph, they receive the *crown of life* "here" and hereafter.

Notice the genealogy of sin, v. 15. Lust is the parent of sin, and sin when matured is the parent of death. How different to the blackness of this dark picture is the light and glory of our Father's home and realm! All the good things of our lives are from his good hand. He is not fickle and changeable. Even our sin cannot make him turn away. His sun still shines on the evil and the good, and his rain descends on the just and the unjust. See Matt. 5:45. We are his children; let us be sweet to the taste as the grapes of Eschol!

3. Doers, Not Hearers Only.

James 1:19-27. Keep your mouth closed when you are angry; the inner fire will die out of itself, if you keep the doors and windows shut. In v. 18 we are taught that God's truth is the agent of regeneration; in v. 21 it is the means of deepening our consecration. It is a blessed thing, when not only the *words*, but the *Word* of God is engrafted on the wild stock of our nature.

The one and only way of making holy impressions permanent is by translating them into Christian living. It is not enough to see ourselves reflected in the mirror of God's Word; we must *so continue*, not as hearers who forget, but as doers that perform. Many appear to think that blessedness results from *hearing*, and are always on foot to attend new conventions. No; the true blessedness accrues from *doing*. The heart of our Christian faith is purity, the stainless garb of the soul, and thoughtful ministration to the widow and orphan—but these are possible only through the indwelling of Christ by the Holy Spirit.

4. Avoid Servility to the Rich.

James 2:1-13. This sin of making distinctions in God's house is as rife today as ever; and wherever it

is practiced the divine Spirit departs. God's love is impartial, so far as outward appearances might affect it; and in his Church the only real differences must be those of humility, purity and righteousness.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit," whether they be rich in this world's goods or not. But it is easier for a poor man to be rich in faith and an heir of the Kingdom, because he can give more of his attention to the things of the Spirit.

The law of love must be supreme with us; and we must love our fellows, whatever their position or property, as ourselves, for Christ's sake. If we fail in this, we show that we have never entered into the heart of the Christian faith. A man may observe all the laws of health; but if he inhale one whiff of poison he may die; so we may be outwardly obedient to the entire Decalogue, but delinquency in love will invalidate everything.

5. Deeds the Evidence of Faith.

James 2:14-26. The Apostle is speaking here of a faith that does not result in a changed life. It is the faith which believes *about* Jesus Christ, as distinguished from that which believes *in* him. We may believe about him as we do about Luther or Washington, but such faith will not avail, either here or hereafter. It can no more affect our condition than the pious wish that a shivering beggar may be warmed and fed will make him either one or the other.

The presence or absence of results in life and conduct is the real test of faith, as the green shoot of a living seed. James calls these results *works*. We are justified by works, because they prove our faith to be the real faith. Real faith binds the soul to the living Christ, produces deep penitence and humility, and brings about an absolutely new sort of behavior—as when Abraham was willing to offer Isaac, and Rahab received and assisted the spies. To reckon on God is to be a friend of God.

6. Bridle the Tongue.

James 3:1-12. It is much easier to teach people what they should be and do than to obey our own precepts. Even the best of us stumble in many respects; but our most frequent failures are in speech. If we could control our tongues, we should be masters of the whole inner economy of our natures. The refusal to express a thought will kill the thought. Let Christ bridle your mouth, and he will be able to turn about your whole body. Let him have his hand on the tiller of your tongue, and he will guide your life as he desires.

A single spark may burn down a city. The upsetting of an oil lamp in a stable led to the burning of Chicago. Lighted at the flames of hell, the tongue can pass their vitriol on to earth. Man cannot tame the tongue, but Christ can. He goes straight for the heart, for, as he said long ago, the seat of the mischief is there. See Mark 7:14, 15; Ps. 51:10.

7. Seek Wisdom from Above.

James 3:13-18. The true wisdom is not the child of the intellect, but of the heart. It consists not only in what we know, but in what we are. It is in this sense that it is used in the earlier chapters of the book of Proverbs and in Job 28. Some who profess to be wise are jealous and factious, despising others and confident in their superiority. This spirit and temper are from beneath.

Notice this exquisite string of qualities—like a thread of pearls—that characterize true wisdom: First, pure; then peaceable—this is God's order, never peace at any price. First the holy heart, then the quiet and gentle one. Mercy and good works follow, "free from favoritism and insincerity"; and as the peace-loving soul goeth through the world, dropping the seeds of peace, those seeds produce harvests of righteousness. Those that in peace sow peace, shall reap a harvest of righteousness, the fruit of peace. Such a springtime! Such an autumn!

8. "Draw Nigh to God."

James 4:1-10. The Apostle returns to "the jealousy and faction" of the previous chapter, 3:14, and says that these evils are traceable to *lust*, that is, to inordinate desire. The restless inward war is the prolific parent of failure in speech and act. If we would pray more and better, we should soon find the inner fires dying down.

In v. 5, R.V., margin, we learn that God has placed his Spirit within us, and that he yearns for complete control over our hearts. He can best overcome inordinate desire and teach us how to pray. God wants more of us. His love is insatiable in its yearning for every room and cupboard of our inner life, and he is ever wishful to give more grace.

There are four conditions which we must fulfill, if God is to have full possession: (1) We must be subject to the will of God, v. 7; (2) we must draw nigh to God, v. 8; (3) we must cleanse our hands and purify our hearts, v. 8; (4) we must humble ourselves in his sight, v. 10. Then God will fill the soul, the sluice-gates of which are open to him.

9. "If the Lord Will."

James 4:11-17. When we speak evil of another, we usurp the functions of the only lawgiver and judge. If that other is endeavoring to model his life by the law, to speak evil of him is to question not his action alone, but the law he is trying to observe. Let us turn the light in upon ourselves and be merciless in self-criticism, while merciful to all others. When you see another doing wrong, always ask yourself whether the same evil is not hiding in your own character. Do not speak *of* men, but *to* them, when their faults confront you.

We are prone to make plans without reference to God's will. Life is so transient and brief that if we are to make the most of it, we should ask the divine

Spirit to choose for and guide us. Our one endeavor must be to discover God's will and do it. If we are not constantly saying, "If the Lord will," the sentiment it expresses should always be uppermost with us. "Thy will be done" in me as in heaven!

10. Patiently Await the Lord's Coming.

James 5:1-11. There are many among the rich who are using money as a sacred trust. Not against these does the Apostle utter his terrible anathemas, but against those who make money by oppression and hoard it for their selfish ends. Riches, which have not been gotten righteously, ever bring a curse with them; and the rust of unused or misused wealth eats not only into the metal but into the miser's flesh. In the light of this passage, it is as great a wrong to hoard up for selfish ends money entrusted as a stewardship, as it is to obtain it unrighteously.

There is a sense in which the Lord is ever at hand and present. But he shall come again at the end of this age. Then all wrongs shall be righted and the oppressed avenged. Everything comes to him who can wait for it; do not judge the Lord by his unfinished work. Be patient till he unveils the perfected pattern in glory. *Await the end of the Lord!*

11. Effectual Prayer.

James 5:12-20. In view of the judgment-seat, at which we shall have to give an account of our words, we shall do well to employ the simplest, plainest speech, *Matt. 5:34; 12:36, 37.*

How shall we act in any given situation? The Apostle says in effect, *be perfectly natural*. The suffering should pray, the glad sing, the sick confess his sins and call for believing prayer. The oil is the symbol of the Holy Spirit. The body is the Holy Spirit's temple, and he is asked to bring it to the level of that spiritual wholeness which is his ideal. Where he gives the prayer that can affirm and claim, there is no doubt that

perfect health will result. But there is all the difference between human telepathy and divine healing, which is God's gift to faith.

Elijah became what he was by faith and prayer. Naturally he was subject to the same fears and failings as ourselves. There are two reasons why we should endeavor to convert men: (1) for their salvation, (2) for the arrest of their baleful influence.

(For Review Questions see next page.)

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

OUTLINE.

- (a) What is the theme of the Epistle?
- (b) How is it developed?

INTRODUCTION.

- (c) What information does the New Testament afford with regard to the author of this Epistle?
- (d) When was the Epistle written?
- (e) To whom was it addressed?

SECTIONS 1-11. CHAPTERS 1-5.

(Each question applies to the paragraph of corresponding number in the Comments.)

- 1. How may our need of wisdom be supplied?
- 2. What is the source of temptation?
- 3. How does pure religion find expression?
- 4. What is the royal law?
- 5. What is the relation between faith and works?
- 6. Why is there special need of controlling the tongue?
- 7. What is the character of heavenly wisdom?
- 8. Why are our prayers often unanswered?
- 9. To what extent are our lives under providential control?
- 10. Why are dishonest gains a curse? What is the reward of patience?
- 11. What is recommended for the joyful? For the sick? What did Elijah accomplish through prayer? What great opportunity for service is open to the Christian?

XI

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

OUTLINE OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRIST'S SUFFERING AND GLORY

SALUTATION	1:1, 2.
I. THE CONFLICT OF HOPE AND SUFFER- ING	1:1-12.
1. <i>The Living Hope Born of Christ's Resurrection</i>	1:3-5.
2. <i>Trials and Sufferings</i>	1:6, 7.
3. <i>The Triumph of Hope</i>	1:8-12.
II. A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD AND A HOLY NATION	1:13-2:10.
1. <i>The Call to Holiness</i>	1:13-17.
2. <i>Christ's Work of Redemption</i>	1:18-21.
3. <i>The Believer's Regeneration</i>	1:22-2:3.
4. <i>The Stone Rejected by the Build- ers</i>	2:4-8.
5. <i>The People of God</i>	2:9, 10.
III. CHRIST'S UNPARALLELED EXAMPLE ...	2:11-4:19.
1. <i>The Obligations of the Christian Life</i>	2:11-20.
2. <i>The Example of Christ</i>	2:21-25. (His sinlessness.)
3. <i>The Obligations of the Christian Life</i>	3:1-17. (Mutual Forbearance of Wives and Husbands, Brotherly Love, Pity, Courtesy, Overcoming Evil with Good.)
4. <i>The Example of Christ</i>	3:18-22. (His suffering for sin.)
5. <i>The Obligations of the Christian Life</i>	4. (Living to God, Watching, Praying, Hospitality, Suffering as a Christian.)
IV. THE DIRECTION OF THE CHURCH.....	5:1-9.
1. <i>Duties of Elders</i>	5:1-4.
2. <i>Duties of Young Men</i>	5:5-9.
CONCLUSION	5:10-14.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

This Epistle was addressed primarily to Christian Hebrews, though it does not exclude Gentiles who, by adoption and faith, become members of the true Israel of God. The countries named are from northeast to southwest in Asia Minor. As might have been expected, the paragraphs glow with Peter's fervent zeal and ardent love. There is also a deep vein of patience and of desire to encourage those who were suffering. The fiery trial was the Neronian persecution, which the emperor instigated to divert from himself the stigma of having set Rome on fire. The date, therefore, is about 65 A.D.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

1. Our Imperishable Inheritance.

1 Peter 1:1-12. Scattered strangers! The designation is true of us all. Note the reference to the Trinity involved in the opening sentence. Our inheritance is prepared and kept for us, as we for it. We who believe may count on the guarding power of God. Not till our spirit is joined to a perfected body in the presence of Christ will our salvation be complete.

Trial is manifold. There is more or less of it in every true life. The best diamonds take longer in cutting and polishing. But, after all, compared to the eternity before us, it is but short-lived, and there is a needs-be for all. Hope in v. 3, faith in v. 7, love in v. 8, blend in the joy that is unspeakable and full of the glory which is as yet hidden.

Notice that the prophets, angels and apostles are represented as deeply interested in that glorious salvation which God has declared unto mankind in the gospel, and by which we have been redeemed.

2. Redeemed and Purified.

1 Peter 1:13-25. The appeal for a holy life is enforced by considering the great cost of our redemption and the great hope which is opened before us. Ours must be the girded loins, lest our desires trail after forbidden things, or be sullied by the mud on the road. We must be holy, as God is: and this can be realized only when we allow God, by his Holy Spirit, to pour himself into our natures.

There is no fear like that which love begets. We do not fear God with the fear of the slave or felon, but with the fear of the love that cannot endure the thought of giving pain to the loving and loved. Who can think of returning to Egypt, when such a Pass-over lamb has redeemed us! Our redemption was not

an after-thought with God. It is part of an eternal plan; let us not get entangled in the meshes of mere earthly ambition. Notice the familiar combination of faith, hope and love, vs. 21, 22. But these graces are only indigenous in those who have been twice born by the Spirit through the Word.

3. Building on the Precious Corner-Stone.

1 Peter 2:1-10. It is easy to lay aside malice, guile and evil speaking, when we are constantly feeding on the unadulterated milk of spiritual truth. If you have tasted of the grace of Jesus, you will not want to sip of the wine of Sodom. Drink, O beloved, eat and drink abundantly, that we may grow, casting aside sinful and childish things.

The changing imagery of the next paragraph is remarkable. As we touch the Living Stone we live, and we touch others who are touching him, and so a temple begins to grow up. Then we become a holy priesthood in the temple, and finally the sacrifices which are offered within its precincts. If Christ is not that Living Stone for you, he will be your undoing.

All that God said of his ancient people may be realized by us in and through Christ. Compare v. 9 with Exod. 19: 6. Thus songs of praise are ever ascending to him who has called us into his light.

4. The Christian Pilgrim's Walk.

1 Peter 2:11-17. Strong desires must be kept under the stronger hand of the Christian soul—not extirpated but turned into right directions as God's providence points the way. Our desires ultimately rule our prayers and our life. We must therefore keep them above all else, for out of the heart are the issues of life. "Cleanse thou the thoughts of our heart by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee." God does not wish the extirpation of any element of our nature, but its consecration. We must not allow *wrong* things; and we must not allow the abuse

or excess of right ones. The silent witness of a holy life or a well-ordered home is of incalculable worth. Oh that people in contact with us may turn from us to glorify God! See v. 12.

Though we do not belong to this world, but are passing through it to our home, we should show ourselves willing to conform to the institutions and customs of the world around us, so far as we can do so without injury to conscience or betrayal of the rights of Christ.

5. Following the Shepherd of Souls.

1 Peter 2:18-25. The argument from this point seems to be: Since you have been redeemed, live worthily of your heavenly calling in relation to your fellow-believers, to God, and to the state, v. 17; to your employers, v. 18; to husbands, 3:1; to wives, v. 7; to everyone, v. 8.

Some of the tenderest words in the Epistles are addressed to the household slaves, who constituted a very important part of the primitive Church. Masters and mistresses had absolute control over their chattels; and might put them to death without interference from the state. The Apostle endeavors to cheer them while bearing their nameless wrongs. They were to bear all their sorrows patiently and silently, following in the footsteps of their Lord, and certain that he would vindicate them.

Let employees remember that they have been placed in worldly and ungodly homes as lamps on dark landings, in order to bear witness to Jesus by the simplicity and beauty of their conversation. And the way of the Cross is the only safe way for us all, if we would keep in touch with our Shepherd and Protector.

6. Christian Family-Life.

1 Peter 3:1-12. In the previous chapter the Apostle had been urging the poor slaves of wealthy householders to submit quietly to wrongs, leaving God to vindicate them.

cate. Here he turns to the wives of unbelieving husbands, showing that their chaste behavior, their meek and quiet spirit, their pleasant subordination of self, are the greatest arguments for our religion. What we are is more important than what we say. Our life is our best sermon. If we would expend as much care on the *hidden* man of the heart as many do on the *outer*, what lovely characters would result! When Massillon had preached on this subject of the inner and outer man before Louis XIV, the king exclaimed as he left the church, "I know those two men!"

The same temper becomes us all. Let us be compassionate to the faults of others, even when they repay our good with evil and revile our blessing. God sends rain and sun irrespective of the character of the recipients. In this way we shall inherit the blessedness to which we have been called, and see good days.

7. Following Christ in Bearing Injustice.

1 Peter 3:13-22. It was said of Archbishop Cranmer that the way to make him a life-long friend was to do him some dis-service, and surely these words of the Apostle have created many characters of the same type. The one aim and purpose of life should be to sanctify Christ as Lord: that is, to put him on the throne. Let all the powers of our nature stand around to do his bidding, as the courtiers of a royal sovereign.

Keep a good conscience! Remember you have to live with yourself! A good conscience is the best bed-fellow! Paul exercised himself always to have a conscience void of offense toward God and man, Acts 23:1; 24:16. This is especially necessary when we are called on to give our witness for our Lord. We must not keep silent when we ought to speak, and when we speak we should do so reverently, simply and without heat.

Our Lord seems to have carried the news of redemption through the world of disembodied spirits. The Apostle compares baptism to the deluge, because it

lies between the believer and his old worldly life, as Noah's flood lay between the old world and the new which emerged from its waters.

8. The New Life in Christ.

1 Peter 4:1-11. The Apostle urges the disciples to make a clean break with sin. As our Lord's grave lay between him and his earlier life, so there should be a clean break between our life as believers and the earth-bound life, which was dominated by lawless passions. Sometimes God employs the acid of persecution or suffering to eat away the bonds that bind us to our past. Let us accept these with a willing mind. The one condition of reigning with the enthroned Christ is to submit to his cross. Of course, we must die to animal instinct, to the blandishments of the world, and to the temptations of the evil one; but it is quite as important to die to our self-life, whether it be clothed in white or black!

We are summoned to a life of prayer. But in order to promote fervency in prayer we must be sober-minded and self-controlled, v. 7; loving, v. 8; and faithful to our stewardship of all God's entrusted gifts, v. 10. Let us cultivate the invariable habit of looking up from our service, of whatever kind, to claim the ability to do it for the glory of God, v. 11.

9. Suffering as a Christian.

1 Peter 4:12-19. We are called upon to share our Saviour's sufferings—not those of his substitution, but his daily self-denial, the hatred of men, the anguish of his soul over the obstinacy and opposition of the world. The soldier who is nearest his leader, charging through the *mêlée* of the fight, is likely to get the same treatment as is meted out to his prince. It is not strange! It would be strange if it were not so, and if the traits in us that characterize our Lord did not win the same hatred as they won for him.

The salvation of the righteous is a task of enormous

difficulty. It requires the dead-lift of Omnipotence. Nothing less will suffice than the infinite grace of the Father, the blood of the Son, and the patience of the Holy Spirit. What will be the fate of those who refuse these! Will they appear at the marriage-supper of the Lamb; and if not—*where!* What a beautiful closing verse! The committal of the soul, not only to the Saviour, but to the *Creator*. After all, he who made can best understand, adjust and satisfy the nature which he himself has given!

10. Serving One Another.

1 Peter 5:1-7. According to these words Peter, though he stood at a distance, must have been an eye-witness of the Saviour's death. He is careful to speak of the glory in the same breath as the sufferings, because if we endure the one, we shall share the other. Positions of influence in the Church in those days involved grave risks, but the Apostle believed that love to Christ would induce men to take the place of under-shepherds to the flock of God, and that they would use their power with gentleness, humility and holy consistency.

The younger men may include the deacons, but the *all*, v. 5, refers to the entire membership. They were to gird on humility, as a slave his towel, that they might serve one another, John 13:4. Those who humble themselves in the profoundest loyalty toward God stand as rocks before their fellows. Remember Luther's—"Here I stand, I can do no other." You cannot say, "Nobody cares what becomes of me." God cares, and with an infinite tenderness. He cared before you cast your care on him! God is linked to your little life by his tender regard and care for you.

11. Resisting the Devil.

1 Peter 5:8-14. We hear of the adversary in Zech. 3:1. The enemy of Christ desires to hurt the Shepherd

by injuring his flock. The hunger of a lion for his prey is an emblem of the insatiable desire of our spiritual foes for our undoing. *Walketh about*—temptation never assails us long from the same quarter. Perhaps the figure of a roaring lion suggests an outburst of persecution, which made timid people tremble. See 2 Tim. 4:17.

All grace is in God for every hour and need, v. 10. We too are called to his eternal glory through Christ. The path of suffering, and that path alone, leads to the world where suffering is unknown. The suffering is only for a little while. *Perfect*, that nothing be lacking; *stablish*, that we may not waver; *strengthen*, that we may stand and withstand.

Silvanus is Silas, v. 12. He was a man to be trusted. Peter's theme was grace. So he began, so he finishes; and from the church in the literal Babylon, or in Rome, Rev. 14:8, where he and Mark were living and working, he sends this message of grace, and love and peace.

(For Review Questions see next page.)

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

OUTLINE.

- (a) What is the theme of this Epistle?
- (b) What are the main divisions?
- (c) Why is the third division the heart of the Epistle?

INTRODUCTION.

- (d) To whom was this Epistle addressed?
- (e) What was the fiery trial to which it refers?

SECTIONS 1-11. CHAPTERS 1-5.

(Each question applies to the paragraph of corresponding number in the Comments.)

1. Why is our faith subject to trials?
2. What is the price of our redemption?
3. What privileges are open to us through faith?
4. What are the duties of a Christian?
5. What is the distinguishing mark of the Christian character?
6. What are the qualities of Christian womanhood?
7. How can we best silence our opponents?
8. What is the evidence of being armed with the mind of Christ?
9. Why should a Christian rejoice in suffering?
10. What duties are incumbent upon leaders in Christian work?
11. Who is the Christian's great enemy? How may his efforts be defeated?

XII

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

OUTLINE OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

FAITH'S CONFLICT AND VICTORY

SALUTATION	1:1, 2.
I. FAITH IMPLANTED	1:3-11.
1. <i>Partakers of the Divine Nature</i>	1:3-7.
2. <i>The Christian's Security</i>	1:8-11.
II. FAITH QUICKENED	1:12-21.
1. <i>The Cultivation of Christian Memory</i> ...	1:12-15.
2. <i>The Twofold Witness to Christ</i>	1:16-21.
III. FAITH ASSAULTED	2.
1. <i>The Invasion of Unbelievers</i>	2:1-3.
2. <i>Warnings from Past Judgments</i>	2:4-10.
3. <i>Bond-Servants of Corruption</i>	2:11-22.
JV. FAITH VICTORIOUS	3.
1. <i>The Answer to Mockers</i>	3:1-9.
2. <i>The New Heavens and Earth</i>	3:10-13.
CONCLUSION	3:14-18.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

This Epistle was addressed to the same persons or churches as the former one, 3:1. But years separate the two, and the aged Apostle was expecting to be called upon to seal his witness with his blood, 1:14. His purpose in this dying charge is to caution the Christian community against the dangers which were insidiously at work among them, and were more to be feared than persecution from without. His great argument to this end is the near advent of our Lord.

The genuineness of this Epistle has been questioned; but it is contained in the list of canonical books put forth by the Council of Carthage in A.D. 397. There is so strong an identity in the use of words, between these two Epistles, and the testimony of the writer as an eye-witness of the glory of the Transfiguration is so unmistakable, that we need entertain no doubt as to the justice of its position among the accepted Scriptures. Compare 1:16, 17 with 1 Pet. 5:1.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

1. The Rule of Christian Growth.

2 Peter 1:1-11. The keynote of this paragraph is *these things*, vs. 8, 9, 10. *Precious faith*, v. 1, answers to *precious promises*, v. 4. Notice that God has given us every provision for a godly life, through the knowledge of Jesus, but that we must avail ourselves of it. The promises are great and precious, but we must appropriate and absorb them, if we are through them to partake of the divine nature. Our redemption has been secured by our Saviour, but we must constantly advance and add to the golden links already securely stapled in faith.

In vs. 5-7, a choir with linked hands passes before us, each member of which leads another; or we may use another similitude, and say that each grace, here mentioned, is contained in the next, as a series of Chinese boxes. To be deficient in *these things* is to be barren and unfruitful, v. 8, and to be shortsighted, v. 9. We may well desire the abundant entrance, v. 11, not like waterlogged vessels, but with every sail unfurled—not landing on the celestial shore unexpected and unwanted, but welcomed by those we have helped.

2. "Eye-Witnesses of His Majesty."

2 Peter 1:12-21. Peter could never forget what the Master had predicted of his death. See John 21:18. Oh, that in our death, whatever be its mode, we may glorify God! The fulfillment of those words was already looming before Peter's eyes, but he had no fear. He describes his home-going by the word used by Moses and Elijah when they spoke of the decease (*lit.*, *exodus*) which the Lord would accomplish. Compare v. 15 with Luke 9:31, R.V., margin.

Then the whole scene of the Transfiguration rose

before his mind. It seemed as if he were again on that holy mount, beholding the majesty of the Lord and hearing the Father's attesting voice. There are three infallible proofs of Christianity: (1) the witness of the Apostles; (2) the light of prophecy as fulfilled in Christ; (3) the testimony of the Holy Spirit. These three burn in the dark night of the present and we may count on them till we see the first glimmer of dawn. Then we shall need no candle, for the Lord God will give us light.

3. Doom and Deliverance.

2 Peter 2:1-11. Already the early Church was threatened with destructive heresies introduced by men who desired only their self-aggrandizement. All the Apostles give warning against such, and point to character as the one supreme test of doctrine. The real drift of the heresies is to deny the Master, who bought us as slaves in the market of the world. Of all the bidders, there is none who has bidden so high as he.

Many instances are quoted from the past to prove the fearful judgments which must overtake such false teachers. The angels who placed their self-will in antagonism to their Maker were cast down to Tartarus—a Greek word used only here in the New Testament. The people who lived previous to the Flood, and they who afterward at Sodom disregarded the laws of purity and self-restraint, dictated alike by nature and conscience, were overwhelmed in destruction. But even amid such judgments, God discriminates his Noahs and his Lots, preserves and delivers them, and numbers them among his jewels, Mal. 3:17. God has his eye on you and will succor you.

4. The Dark Way of Animalism.

2 Peter 2:12-22. The description of these false teachers is terrific! They are slaves to their brute instincts. They are as abusive as they are ignorant. They destroy and will be destroyed. They feast daint-

ily in the broad daylight, instead of leading abstemious and sober lives. With them, the very church feasts were occasions for self-indulgence. Their eyes never ceased from the sin against which the Lord warns us in Matt. 5:28. Balaam is an awful example of such, torn, as he was, between the celestial vision of his spirit and the sensual appetite of his soul.

The will of man, as in Balaam's case, is always poisoning itself between its knowledge of good and evil and its strong bias toward evil. Only the help of God can correct this. Let us "who are just escaping," v. 18, R.V., from the meshes of the world, beware lest we be caught in the guiles and nets of false teaching, which would drag us back into the evils of the worldly life. It is in our heart-felt union with the Lord Jesus Christ alone that we can be permanently secure.

5. Longsuffering Delay.

2 Peter 3:1-9. Peter does not hesitate to place the commandments of himself and the other Apostles of Jesus on a level with the words *which were spoken before by the holy prophets*, and he repeats his admonitions because of the urgency of the crisis then threatening the Church. Apparently there was a well-grounded fear that she would relax her attitude of expectancy and give credence to the materialistic philosophy of the age.

Men argued then from the appearances of things, and especially from the regular routine of cause and effect. They did not realize that, from time to time, there had been the intrusion of the divine personal will into the course of history, introducing a higher set of laws and arresting the ordinary succession of events; as for instance, the Flood and the miracles of Old Testament history. Why, then, should not the ordinary course of nature be broken in upon by the Second Advent, when the Lord shall gather his saints about him and reign gloriously? What God has done

he can do again! There is a person and a will behind the slight veil of the present life.

6. "Holy Living and Godliness."

2 *Peter* 3:10-18. How quickly the great European convulsion broke upon the world in the summer of 1914! Who expected such a sudden burst of the great storm! We are evidently near some vast change in the history of mankind, which may fitly be compared to the coming of *new heavens and a new earth*, as mentioned in v. 13. The condition of the world calls on each of us to be holy, as the virgins in their pure dresses, with burning and well-filled lamps. See *Matt.* 25:1-13. This is the manner in which we may hasten the coming of the day of God. It is not enough to *say*, "Thy kingdom come." Each day we should move some pebble from its pathway!

In twenty-four hours God can do as much as all his servants at home and abroad could not accomplish in a thousand years. According to God's chronology, it was on the morning of yesterday that Jesus died. Be watchful. Christ's *coming* is certain, but not the *hour*. If we are blameless now, we shall be faultless presently. See *Jude* 24.

(For Review Questions see next page.)

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

OUTLINE.

- (a) What is the theme of the Epistle?
- (b) What are its main divisions?

INTRODUCTION.

- (c) To whom was this Epistle addressed?
- (d) What interval had elapsed since the first Epistle was written?
- (e) What was the writer's purpose?
- (f) What is to be said regarding the genuineness of the Epistle?

SECTIONS 1-6. CHAPTERS 1-3.

(Each question applies to the paragraph of corresponding number in the Comments.)

1. What elements enter into a fruitful Christian life?
2. What special testimony had Peter received concerning Christ?
3. What evidence is there that judgment awaits evil-doers?
4. Against what influences must the Christian contend?
5. How do scoffers seek to overthrow the faith?
6. What is the great expectation of the Christian?

XIII
THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

OUTLINE OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

THE REDEEMING LOVE OF GOD IN CHRIST

INTRODUCTION1:1-4.

1. *The Character of God Revealed in*

Christ1:5—2:6.

2. *The New Commandment*2:7-28.

3. *Divine Sonship Tested by Love*2:29—3:18.

4. *The Ground of Assurance*3:19—4:6.

5. *"God Is Love"*4:7-21.

6. *The Threefold Witness*5:1-12.

CONCLUSION5:13-21.

THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

In addition to the Gospel, three Epistles have come to us from the pen of the beloved Apostle. Of these the First is the longest and most important. In form it is more like an essay or treatise than a letter; it bears no salutation nor signature. But if there were no other evidence, its similarity in phrase and thought to the Fourth Gospel would practically decide the question of authorship. Which-ever was written first, the relation between the two is perfectly clear and has been aptly expressed by Bishop Westcott: "The theme of the Epistle is, the Christ is Jesus; the theme of the Gospel is, Jesus is the Christ." The bearing of the Epistle upon practical living is also very plain. It shows that fellowship with the Father and the Son is realized in love of the brethren.

The Second and Third Epistles are very brief, and are private and personal rather than doctrinal. They have been called by Jerome "twin sisters." In style and spirit they markedly resemble the First Epistle. There is the same emphasis upon love, truth, and obedience. While we are without exact information as to their date, they rank unquestionably among the latest documents in the New Testament.

THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

1. Fellowship in the Light.

1 John 1:1-10. As the aged Apostle began to write he was living over again his first happy experiences with the Saviour. He heard the voice, saw the person, touched the very body in which Deity tabernacled. It was too great a bliss to be enjoyed alone, and John tells us that we may enter into the same close partnership with the Father and the Son. But no impurity or insincerity is permissible to those who enter that fellowship. Our one aim should be to maintain such a walk with God that the union with God may be unimpaired. If there are still sins of ignorance, the blood of Jesus will continue to remove them. Sin differs from sins, as the root from the fruit. God does not only forgive, he cleanses. He is faithful to his promises and just to his Son. Notice the *if's* of these verses and in 2:1; they are a compendium of the blessed life.

2. Keeping His Commandment of Love.

1 John 2:1-11. It is clearly possible to be kept from known and presumptuous sin. We shall be tempted, for that is an inevitable experience of life in this world; but we may be perfectly kept by the indwelling Spirit. Yet if we should be overtaken by some sudden gust of temptation, let us not despair; our Advocate ever makes intercession for us. The evidence that we have a saving knowledge of our Saviour is obtained, not by the memory of a rapturous experience, but because we are conscious of doing, for his sake, things which we should otherwise evade. Let us continue to do such things, because by the path of patient obedience we shall enter into the Paradise of perfect love. The outer walk is the best evidence to ourselves and others that there is an abiding union between us and Jesus. Light involves love; and love,

light. Love and you are in light. Indulge hatred or ill-will and you begin to grope in darkness.

3. Transient Desires, Abiding Life.

1 John 2:12-17. There are gradations in Christian experience—the child, the father, the young man. The note of the child is the glad sense of forgiveness; of the father, a deep knowledge of God; of the young man, victory over the power of evil. With all these is growth. The child, through forgiveness, also comes to know the Father; the fathers can only go on to know God more profoundly; and as the young men become stronger they are more aware of the indwelling spirit of power.

Distinguish between the world of nature and the world of appearance, which is an illusion, the vain dream of human imaginings and boastings. It is the sphere of sense as contrasted with the sphere of spirit. It is the sum of all that the flesh lusts after, the eyes feast on, and the soul takes pride in. The Preacher gathers the world into one phrase, “under the sun,” Eccles. 1:3. The world is passing as a moving-picture film, and the power to enjoy it is vanishing also. Only that which is rooted in God abides.

4. Loyalty to Truth.

1 John 2:18-29. The Holy One is surely the risen Saviour, who has passed into the heavens, whence he bestows the Holy Spirit as a sacred chrism on meek and trustful souls. We can say with the psalmist, “Thou anointest my head with oil.” Let us seek fresh anointings. “I shall be anointed with fresh oil,” Ps. 92:10. Whenever we attempt to do God’s work, we should be able to say, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and he hath anointed me.” The anointed soul understands things hidden from the wise and prudent, v. 27.

We must hold the Word of Christ by perpetual reiteration and meditation; only so shall we be able to

abide in him. This abiding life involves not merely that we shall work for God, but that God will work through us. The abiding branch bears much fruit, because the energy of the vine is set free to work its will through its yielded channels. A life of abiding communion with Christ will never be ashamed in this or in any other world.

5. The Marks of God's Children.

1 John 3:1-12. This chapter opens with one of the astounding announcements of Scripture. Why God should have made *us* his children is incomprehensible, except to show forth the riches of his grace. See Eph. 2:7. That such we are is certain, but how marvelous! Yet even greater wonders await us, for we are to be like Jesus our Lord. He is the type to which we are being conformed, and on the other side we shall awake in his likeness.

He is pure; such is the verdict of one who lived in the closest possible association with him. We cannot think of Christ, or of the future to be spent with him, without desiring purity above all. Ask him to become in thee the fountain of purity! If he is thy constant study, the quality of his character will become thine. Presumptuous sin is impossible under such conditions. He will destroy the works of the devil in the individual and in the universe. That we are God's own children is proved by our integrity and love. They are the hallmark of God's ownership.

6. Loving in Deed and in Truth.

1 John 3:13-24. Love to the brethren is a sign that we have been born into the family. We may not *like* them all, yet we can *love* them. If we love, we live; and if we live in the deepest sense, we shall love; that is, we shall put others first, and our care for them will be tinged with the crimson of sacrifice. Love is not measured by the expressions of the lip or the emotion

of the heart, but by the extent to which we will do or suffer.

The believer dares not affirm too much about himself, he is so unworthy and fickle; but God understands us and imputes to us what we would be. Mark in v. 22 the double condition of prevailing prayer. It is also clear from v. 23 that men can believe, if they will. God is prepared to impart to those who are wishful all that he commands. Augustine prayed thus: "Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt."

7. The Token of God's Love.

1 John 4:1-11. In those days the intense ferment of men's minds wrought many delusions and heresies which were fraught with temptation to young converts, and the Apostle wished to give tests for determining which voice spake from God. The confession of Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Word, a spirit of love and gentleness, and the willingness to abide in the doctrine of the Apostles, were signs that the speaker was commissioned by Christ.

Wouldst thou overcome the world? Let Christ enter, and the world will have no charms for thee. There is only one source of pure, divine love, and wherever that love is present, you know that the possessor has found its source in God. God's love is absolutely selfless. He loves the unloving to make them love, putting away their sin and perfecting their union with himself.

8. The Test of Our Love.

1 John 4:12-21. If we are willing to be channels through which God's love flows to others, there need be no limit to the fullness of that holy current. In humility, selflessness, and gentleness, it will become perfected. The vessel placed beneath the waterfall is filled to overflowing.

Through our Saviour we know the Father who sent him, v. 14. See John 14: 9, 10. We first venture on God's love by faith; afterward we know it. Dare to

affirm that God is love. Love is the wafted fragrance of Paradise. If thou lovest, heaven and earth will answer thee in terms of love. By strong, patient, selfless love thou wilt abide in unbroken touch with all pure and loving souls—whoever and wherever. Where love was crucified there was a garden. Where there is love, lonely places blossom as the rose. Be not afraid! Love on! Love always! "This is the true God, and eternal life." But one thought of hatred or ill-will will cause thy wholly happy experience to vanish.

9. The Victorious Life.

1 John 5:1-12. The "begotten" children of God are constantly referred to in this Epistle. The word indicates the communication, in regeneration, of the divine nature, of which the first evidence is love. This love is not a weak sentimentality, but a strong, vigorous response to the motions of the divine love.

God's life in the soul also manifests itself in our faith; and as faith is the substance of the unseen and eternal world, it overcomes the fascination and glamor of this transient scene. Let your faith entwine around the risen Lord and you will be weaned from all else. Jesus must become all-in-all to you, else you will miss the crown!

We need not only the water of repentance, but also the blood of propitiation. When these two are admitted, the Holy Spirit will bear his secret witness to the soul. God is ever bearing witness to the Son by the eternal life that he gives to and maintains in those who believe. Eternity begins even here for those who *have* the Son as their indwelling guest.

10. Ask According to His Will.

1 John 5:13-21. We know that we have eternal life. The rope is in our hand bearing us onward, but its ends are hidden from view in the past and in the future. We also know that God hears us when we comply with the conditions of true prayer. We know,

moreover, that we can become the medium through which the life of God passes to others. Thus the humblest child may have power with God and man.

The Only-Begotten keeps the bezotten. Evil can no more touch them than blight could reach the bush in the wilderness that was bathed in the celestial fire. Who would go back to the world? Enumerate and press to heart these four items of positive knowledge; but beware lest what is legitimate and natural in itself may become an idol. Love, knowledge, abiding, conquering—these are the keynotes of this wonderful letter.

(The following Sections deal respectively with the Second and Third Epistles of John.)

11. Walking in Truth.

2 John 1-13. This exquisite letter, a model of old-world correspondence, was probably written when the Apostle was the guest of the nephews of the lady addressed. The Epistle revolves around the two words, *love* and *truth*, which were the poles of his life. When Christ is in us, not only are we true in judgment and speech, but we recognize truth wherever it is to be found. No horizon bounds the vision of the true and truth-loving soul. Be true and loving, and you will have a rich heritage of grace, mercy, and peace. Love is best shown by obedience. Verse 8 shows a pastor's anxiety. Don't go on without Christ or you will lose God, v. 9. Remember that love can be stern, v. 10.

The letter reveals the strength, purity, and love of the primitive Church. Let us put into our letters thoughts which will make them worth receiving and keeping.

12. The Apostle's Joy.

3 John 1-14. Again we meet the words *love* and *truth*. Transparency of speech and life is an essential condition of soul health. It would not be desir-

able to express the wish of v. 2 to all our friends, because if their bodies were to correspond to the condition of their souls, they would suddenly fall into ill-health. In the old legend mirrors were blurred with mist when any approached who were out of harmony with truth, v. 4.

The Christian must always act worthily of God, especially toward strangers, vs. 5, 6. "For the sake of the Name," v. 7, R.V.—as children we must maintain the family honor. Such hospitality makes us fellow-workers with the truth. There is a Boanergic touch in v. 10. The threefold witness to Demetrius should stir our desire to emulate his character. What will it not be when the dimness of earthly converse is exchanged for the face-to-face intercourse of eternity! v. 14.

(For Review Questions see next page.)

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

OUTLINE OF THE FIRST EPISTLE

- (a) What is the theme of the first Epistle?
- (b) What distinguishing feature of the Epistle appears in the outline?

INTRODUCTION.

- (c) How do these three Epistles compare as to length?
- (d) What is their relation to the Gospel of John?
- (e) What is the probable date of these Epistles?

SECTIONS 1-10. CHAPTERS 1-5.

(Each question applies to the paragraph of corresponding number in the Comments.)

- 1. What was the nature of the fellowship which John wished to share with others?
- 2. What is the best evidence of union with Christ?
- 3. Why does the Apostle address those of various ages?
- 4. What is the *anointing* of the Christian?
- 5. With what announcement does the third chapter open?
- 6. How may we know that we have "passed from death unto life"?
- 7. How does the Christian overcome the world?
- 8. What is the greatest affirmation of this Epistle?
- 9. What is the threefold witness to our redemption?
- 10. What four things is the Christian privileged to know?

SECTIONS 11, 12. THE SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES.

- 11. Around what two words does the second Epistle of John revolve?
- 12. Why is hospitality a Christian grace?

XIV
THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

"CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH."

SALUTATION	1, 2.
1. <i>Warning against Traitors</i>	3, 4.
2. <i>Depravity and Doom of the Ungodly</i> ...	5-16.
3. <i>The Faith and Hope of the Christian</i>	17-22.
CONCLUSION	24, 25.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

The James mentioned in v. 1 is almost certainly the brother of our Lord, who was the well-known and universally revered leader of the mother church at Jerusalem, and the writer of the Epistle that bears his name. Jude, therefore, was also related to our Lord as brother; see Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3. These two were probably with the Apostles after the Ascension, and finally engaged in evangelistic efforts. See Acts 1:14; 1 Cor. 9:5.

We have no certain information concerning him, but Eusebius states that when Domitian ordered all the posterity of David to be slain, "some of the heretics accused the descendants of Jude, as the brother of our Saviour according to the flesh, because they were of the family of David, and as such were also related to Christ." It appears from the historian's subsequent statement that these people made a good confession before their persecutors.

The Epistle was probably addressed to churches eastward of Judaea, among whom Jude had labored; and was probably written about A.D. 66. There are remarkable similarities between this Epistle and 2 Peter, indicating close communication between the two writers, as they looked out on the heretical teachers of the age and the low state of prevailing morals.

THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

1. "Contend Earnestly for the Faith."

Jude 1-11. *Kept* is the keynote of this Epistle. It occurs in vs. 1, 6, 21, and in another form in v. 24. Many evil doctrines and practices were intruding into the Church. Certain persons had crept in, who quoted the mercy of God as an excuse for immorality and practically disowned the teachings of the Lord Jesus.

In contrast with these were the disciples whom Jude addresses and who owned the Lord Jesus as their beloved "Despot," (the Greek for *Master*, v. 4, R.V.) They were kept for him, as the others were kept in chains. Let us also keep ourselves in the love of God, v. 21. It is much easier to live consistently in hours of storm than in hours of ease.

Let us be warned against drifting back from our first faith. Let us take heed from the fate of fallen angels, of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Cain and Balaam, of Korah and others. Let us watch and pray and *earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*, v. 3, bearing it through the world as the pilgrim host bore the sacred vessels in the days of Ezra. See Ezra 8:28.

2. Beware of the Touch of the Ungodly.

Jude 12-25. What traps and pitfalls beset us! How many have fallen who had as good or a better chance than we! The angels kept not their first estate; Adam, though created in innocency, fell; Cain was rejected; Balaam, who saw with open eyes, was slain; Korah, who had carried a censer filled with holy fire, was hurled into the abyss! How can *we* expect to stand! Be of good cheer! *He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless*, v. 24.

In the succession of terrible metaphors in vs. 12 and 13, notice that in each case there is promise with-

out fulfilment and appearance without reality. Such is much of the Christian profession of the present day. And from time to time, as Enoch foretold, the day of the Lord comes, with its retribution for all such.

The four exquisite admonitions of vs. 20 and 21 are worth pondering. Keep yourselves in the main current of God's love. Build your character after the likeness of Christ. Pray in the Holy Spirit; keep at the oriel window of hope. Christ is able to keep, and when at last we are presented by him to the Father, we shall realize how much we owe him.

(For Review Questions see next page.)

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

OUTLINE.

- (a) What is the theme of this Epistle?
- (b) How is it illustrated?

INTRODUCTION.

- (c) What is known of the author of this Epistle?
- (d) To whom was it addressed?
- (e) What is its relation to 2 Peter?

SECTIONS 1, 2.

(Each question applies to the paragraph of corresponding number in the Comments.)

1. What evidence is there that judgment awaits evil-doers?
2. What pitfalls beset the Christian? How may we be completely safeguarded? Give the benediction with which the Epistle closes.

XV
THE BOOK OF REVELATION

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

THE FINAL CONSUMMATION.

INTRODUCTION	1.
I. THE MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES	2, 3.
II. THE PERIOD OF STRUGGLE AND SUFFERING	4—7.
1. <i>The Throne in Heaven</i>	4.
2. <i>The Book with Seven Seals</i> ..	5.
3. <i>The Opening of the Seven Seals</i>	6.
4. <i>The Sealing of the 144,000</i> ..	7.
III. THE MESSIANIC CONFLICT.....	8—14.
1. <i>The Seven Angels with Trumpets</i>	8—11.
2. <i>The Woman and the Dragon</i> ..	12.
3. <i>The Two Beasts</i>	13.
4. <i>The Heavenly Proclamations</i> ..	14.
IV. THE MESSIANIC VICTORY	15—20
1. <i>The Song of Moses and the Lamb</i>	15.
2. <i>The Seven Bowls of Wrath</i> ..	16.
3. <i>The Fall of Babylon</i>	17: 1—19: 10.
4. <i>The Last Judgment</i>	19: 11—20: 15.
V. THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM.....	21: 1—22: 5.
CONCLUSION ...	22: 6-21.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The book of Revelation completes the sacred canon. It sets forth in vivid figures the struggles and sufferings that precede the manifestation of "new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." The unveilings of the future which it contains were given to the beloved Apostle on the island of Patmos, whither he had been banished by the Emperor Domitian, in A. D. 94 or 95. The followers of Christ in those days were exposed to severe sufferings, and nothing could be more appropriate to their circumstances than this book, which is filled with consolation for those who are fighting the Lord's battles. Victory may be delayed, but it is sure.

To every believer this book is especially valuable, because it gives a view of our Lord's life on the other side of death, where he acts as priest and is preparing to rule as king. His temporary subjection to death and his victory over it, his omnipotence and universal dominion, his reception of the adoration which his holy apostles refuse—these are the thoughts that are conveyed in the richest and most striking imagery.

Though many details of the book are difficult of interpretation its main teachings are perfectly clear, and some of its chapters rank among the greatest of all Scripture.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 1:1-8. In his capacity as mediator, our Lord receives from the Father and transmits to his servants, that they may in turn transmit to the world of men, the great panorama of the future, known to him from before the foundation of the world. Let us not miss the special benediction which is attached to the patient reading and consideration of this wonderful book.

The seven churches represent the one Church under different phases and possibly in successive stages of its history; the letters addressed to them are therefore universally applicable. Notice the august reference to the Holy Trinity—the eternal Father, the sevenfold Spirit, and our Lord. Our Lord bore a faithful witness even to death; that death was a birth into the risen life, as ours may be; all kings are his vassals.

How wonderful it is to be told in the next verse that he loves us, and has not only washed, but loosed us, as though he had broken the terrible entail. “He breaks the power of canceled sin.” Jesus often comes with clouds. We cannot understand his dealings with us, yet those clouds are gold with his light. So he shall come at last. As Alpha he begins, but he never begins without carrying into full effect his purpose as our Omega.

2. From the Living Lord to the Churches.

Revelation 1:9-20. The tribulation and patience of Jesus are essential conditions of his Kingdom. We cannot exert the divine energies of the latter, unless we are willing to take our share of the former. There should be no Lord’s Day without our definite claim to be *in the Spirit*; and if we are *in the Spirit*, every day is a day of the Lord. The seven churches are distinct in their several characteristics, but one in their blended light.

Here is variety, but unity. Jesus was *in the midst* on the Cross; he is *in the midst* where two or three are gathered; he is the Lamb, "in the midst of the throne"; but he is also *in the midst* of the collective life of the Church in her earthly ministry and warfare.

The manifestation of his glory may overwhelm our mortality, but the touch of his pierced hand encourages the soul. His favorite assurance is, *Fear not*. Here is life in its threefold aspect! In its original source, first and last. In its triumph over death—*I became dead*. In its eternal reign—*I am alive for evermore*. The things which John had seen are probably comprehended in this chapter; "the things which are" in chapters 2 and 3; and the things which are to come to pass in the remainder of this book.

3. Renew Thy First Love.

Revelation 2:1-7. Each of these letters consists of three parts: 1. The introduction, specifying some characteristic from the vision of the preceding chapter, which is appropriate to the need of the church addressed. 2. A description of the condition of the church. 3. A promise to the overcomer, following the successive revelations of God in the Old Testament, which begin with the tree of life and include the manna, the conquest of Canaan, the glory of the Temple, and the reign of Solomon.

We may go far in outward activity for the cause of the Redeemer and yet be threatened with the removal of our candlestick. Full of labor, opposed to wicked men and false teachers, persistently orthodox, not fainting in the day of trial; and yet, if love be wanting, nothing can compensate. Is the complaint true of us, that we have lost our first love? The exuberance of its emotion may have passed with the years, but has it been replaced by a deep, all-constraining, and masterful devotion to our Lord? It is the Spirit's prerogative to shed abroad his love in our hearts and to teach us to love him. But none of us can acquire that love without perpetually



ST. JOHN AT PATMOS. Revelation 1: 9-11.

From Painting by JEAN L. E. MEISSONIER. Modern French Artist.

feeding on the Tree of Life, which is the emblem of himself, Gen. 2: 9; Rev. 22: 2, 14, 19.

4. "Be Thou Faithful unto Death."

Revelation 2: 8-11. This epistle has a new pathos and significance if we connect it with "the blessed Polycarp," who almost certainly was the angel or chief minister of the church in Smyrna. He was the disciple of John. Irenæus who lived a generation later, tells how, in early boyhood, he had heard from the lips of Polycarp what John had told him of our Lord's person, converse, and earthly ministry.

How sweet the comfort of this epistle must have been to him in the closing scene of his life, when, at eighty-six, he was sentenced to be burned! Notice how every line of it had a message for him, as for all who are called to follow in his steps. The Saviour reminded him that beyond the suffering of this brief life a crown awaited him, which would abundantly reward his fidelity.

What music there is in those inspiring words! Even Peter's crown of glory and Paul's crown of righteousness seem to fade in comparison with this "crown of life." The thought of it enabled Polycarp to say at the stake, "I give thee hearty thanks that thou hast brought me to this hour, that I may have my part in the cup of thy Christ, unto the resurrection of eternal life, through the operation of thy Holy Spirit."

5. Beware of Evil Teachers.

Revelation 2: 12-17. Notice the Lord's commendation of the church at Pergamos (from which we get our word *parchment*). He recognizes their peculiar dangers and their difficulties—*where Satan's seat is*. It was an honorable thing to have held fast Christ's name under such circumstances. To hold fast his name is to be loyal to him in all circumstances. Not to deny his faith is to hold fast to the essential facts and doctrines of primitive Christianity, undeterred by the blandishments or threats of the world.

For the doctrine of Balaam, we must turn to Numbers, chapters 22-24, and then specially to 25: 1 and 31: 16. Balaam had failed to curse, but though he had thereby forfeited his prestige and payment, he won them back by advising Balak to corrupt the morals of Israel and so break their union with Jehovah. The Nicolaitans apparently promulgated similar tenets, and in their proud and wealthy city were prepared to admit orthodoxy of doctrine so long as it was combined with laxity of morals. But Christ cannot for a moment tolerate such a conjunction. His judgment sword must vindicate the purity of his Church.

6. "Hold Fast Till I Come."

Revelation 2: 18-29. Note that Jesus does not hesitate to appropriate the sublime title—*the Son of God*. His eyes penetrate profoundest secrets, and his advent leaves a trail of purity like fire behind him. He recognizes the many good qualities of his church at Thyatira, but accuses her of having raised no protest against the woman Jezebel. She had actually permitted the promulgation of soul-destroying error, with most disastrous results.

This Jezebel apparently taught that there were deep philosophies in the heathen system around them, and the result was that the professing servants of Christ were led into complicity with the outward corruption of heathendom. An evident attempt was being made to graft on to Christianity the mysteries of darkness, which were in direct antagonism to the purity of the teachings of Christ.

Notice the contrast between *her* works and *my* works, vs. 22 and 26. The saints who are true to Christ shall be associated with him in his Kingdom, but best of all they are made to possess the Morning Star, that is, they now stand with their Lord in the dawn of a new era. Already the day has dawned and the Day Star has arisen in their hearts, 2 Pet. 1: 19.

7. "Establish the Things That Remain."

Revelation 3:1-6. In other addresses to the churches our Lord began with commendation, but no such word is here. *He* is described in the fulness of his glorious nature, but this *church* is full of unfulfilled works. What a striking phrase and how true! We begin and do not finish, skirt the edges but do not penetrate to the heart, are superficial and fragmentary. How few can say with the Master, "I have finished the work"; and of how few it can be said, as by Paul of the Baptist, "He fulfilled his course"! Acts 13:25.

There are four evidences of spiritual life. In a living church there will be growth, compassion, unity, and love; and the Lord missed all these and bitterly lamented their absence. Of what use was the fig tree to abate his hunger, when it bore leaves but no fruit? Amid all this disappointing formalism, there were a few live souls who fulfilled their works and did not defile their robes. Does not this suggest the Transfiguration? On the holy mount, the homely garments of Jesus shone with light; and so the inner purity of the saint shines through and glorifies his simplest acts. The holiness we love in this life shall be rewarded by the white robes, Christ's acknowledgment, and the deeds of heavenly citizenship.

8. Let No One Take Thy Crown.

Revelation 3:7-13. For those who have but a little strength, the Lord sets open a wide door. You may not be able to open the door, but you can enter it in his Name. Once he opens the door, all the opposition you may be called upon to encounter will not avail to shut it; and if he shuts the door against your adversaries, all their craft and strength will beat against its exterior in vain. Get Christ to shut the door against the tempting thoughts that would allure you from your allegiance. His beloved may be sorely beset, but he will keep them in the hour of trial. They shall not miss their crown, but shall become permanent and important constituents in

the eternal Temple. We have often stood to notice the strength and stability of a pillar in an old church. It has looked unmoved on generations that have grown from youth to age at its base, and so shall Christ's saints endure.

It is marvelous how much Christ can make of our poor lives, if only we yield to him. It was said of a great statesman recently deceased, "He was a resounding example of what a great thing a great man may make of a life." But how much greater can Christ make a life, once a mere block of stone, but now inscribed with his own mystic handwriting and engraving!

9. "I Stand at the Door and Knock."

Revelation 3:14-22. It is better to be cold than lukewarm, for in the latter case all that God's love can do for the soul has only produced a moderate result, while if we are cold, our soul has yet to be tried. The Gospel has a better chance with the openly profane and godless than with those who have been brought up under its influence and are so far unaffected. The mischief with men generally is that they do not know themselves, and do not want to know; and they are equally ignorant of the rich stores of blessedness that Christ waits to bestow. We think that we abound in gift and grace, when in Christ's eyes we are most pitiable. Yet, at this moment, he is standing at the door, laden with the gifts of heaven. Admit him, or at least lift the latch of the will, so that he may push the door back and enter. Do not attempt to deal with the squalor within; he will see to that, and cleanse, keep, and enrich. Do not try to provide supper; he will bring thee his own flesh and blood.

Ponder that last beatitude, which promises to all believers that if they share with him his age-long conflict against the evil of the world, they shall share his rule and power, which they shall use with him for the uplift and blessing of mankind. Complete and continually re-

newed self-surrender to Christ will admit into our hearts the royalty and power of Christ.

10. "A Throne Set in Heaven."

Revelation 4:1-11. The vision of the ascended Lord introduced the seven letters to the churches, so the visions of this and the next chapters introduce the seven seals. They resemble the frontispiece or illuminated capitals of the old missals. There is no form for the Divine Being. God is Spirit, and his glory can only be hinted at by appropriate imagery. His being should excite emotions in our spirit similar to those which these objects excite in our mind. The jasper with its transparent brilliance, the sardine or cornelian with its fiery red, the emerald with its refreshing beauty, are laid under contribution to describe what cannot be described. The throne bespeaks majestic authority and power. The worship of the elders reflects that of Israel and the Church, Rev. 21:12, 14; the thunder, God's awful holiness; the seven lamps, the searching, cleansing purity of his Spirit; the glassy sea, the mystery of his ways; the four living creatures, the homage of creation.

Here is the song of creation, v. 11. Originally all things did the will of God, and if creation is now subject to vanity, some day it will be delivered into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, and God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Notice that the will of God brought all things into existence, and that that will guarantees their ultimate redemption.

11. The Book with Seven Seals.

Revelation 5:1-8. This "book" is a roll of papyrus or parchment, written on each side to prevent unauthorized additions. Probably it contains the history of the successive steps to be taken to win the empire of the world for Christ. In other words, it tells of the successive stages of the coming of the kingdom of God. As the seals are opened, certain phenomena occur which in part reveal the mysteries hidden in the book, but the

whole is in the hand of the Lamb of God. He alone knows the contents; he alone presides over their development. We must not weep because the future is unknown. "Jesus we know, and he is on the throne." We must trust our own future to Christ without fear or tears of foreboding. The Lamb who shed his blood to redeem may be trusted to order and perfect that which concerneth us.

What contrasts presented themselves! The Apostle looked for a lion, and behold, a lamb; for one who had overcome, and instead, one who had the appearance of having been slain; for one who had the majesty of a king, and instead, the emblem of humility. But in the lamb were the seven horns of perfect power, seven eyes of perfect wisdom, and seven spirits traversing the world, denoting omnipresence. What homage can be offered worthy of this combination of Redeemer and Creator?

12. The One Worthy to Open It.

Revelation 5:9-14. Jesus is worthy to unroll the mystic scroll of history, because he loved and loves our race as no other has ever done; and he is equally worthy to open each new phase of our lives. When he came into the world he said, "In the volume of the book it is written of me." We need not fear those pierced hands. If we are his purchased property, he will provide for us. If we are priests and kings in his ideal, we may trust him so to arrange our life-plan as to secure the best exercise of those sacred functions.

Notice how the out-circling song of the redeemed reaches out in further and yet further response. It begins with the little group around the throne; then it spreads to the angels in their myriads; and thence it is borne forward and outward in concentric rings until the utmost shores of space are struck by the billows of song and it reverberates back to the living creatures and the elders. Heaven is full of the sacrificial side of our Saviour's death. The heavenly beings describe them-

selves as his purchased chattels, and stand closer to Christ than the angels; but these bright ministers of God's will have learned their deepest lessons of God from his redemptive dealings with men.

13. The Riders on the Four Horses.

Revelation 6:1-8. The seals signify those events which prepare the way for the coming of the Kingdom. The breaking of the first seals is accompanied by the summons of one of the living creatures to the glorified Lord to hasten his advent. Come, glorious Redeemer, and bring about the wondrous consummation for which thy bride is waiting. The *white* horse signifies the victorious progress of the gospel; the *red*, war with its bloodshed; the *black*, scarcity and want; the *pale*, or livid, pestilence and death. Compare with Ezek. 14:21 and Matt. 24:6-14. "Thus good and bad their several warnings give of his approach, whom none can see and live. Faith's ear, with awful, still delight, counts them as minute bells at night."

Three lines of interpretation have been adopted for these and the following mysterious utterances of this book. We shall not go into these questions, but present the main spiritual lessons which are generally accepted. That treasure is buried here none can deny; and the perpetual turning over of these sods to discover it, has greatly enriched the Church.

14. "The Wrath of the Lamb."

Revelation 6:9-17. This imagery is very majestic; but we cannot really think that the holy martyrs desire to be revenged, except in love and grace. That their persecutors should be forgiven in Pentecosts of revival must be the highest conception of vengeance that they permit themselves to have. The striking command that they should rest, each en clothed in a white robe of acceptance and purity, until the full roll of martyrs is complete, suggests that every age must yield its tale of those who love not their lives unto the death, because

they love the Master so much more. We, too, have our daily martyrdoms, for it may be harder to live for Jesus always against continued opposition and scorn than to die once for him.

Verses 9 and 10 answer to Matt. 24:6, 7. Verses 12 and 17 to Matt. 24:29, 30. Probably the words here refer, not to the final judgment, but to those revolutionary changes which always accompany the closing of one era and the opening of another; Heb. 22:26, 27.

15. The Multitude before the Throne.

Revelation 7:1-10. Before times of unusual trial God prepares for the safety of his people. See Gen. 7:1; 19:16; Exod. 12:13; Ezek. 9:3-5; Matt. 24:15, 16. What a majestic conception this is and how comforting the thought that the winds are controlled by angels, and that the storms which sweep earth and heaven must obey the mandate of eternal love! God's people are not always saved from trial, but they are kept safe in it. We are *sealed* when the divine likeness is stamped on our characters, Eph. 1:13. Those that have that likeness also enjoy the earnest of heaven in their hearts, 2 Cor. 1:21, 22.

The definiteness of the number sealed indicates the perfectness and greatness of this first fruit sheaf of souls. If the first sheaf be so full and heavy, what will not the harvest be! See 14:4. Beyond human count in number; representing every country under heaven; spotless in character; victorious in their conflict with evil; ascribing all glory to the Lamb as the result of his travail of soul. The tribe of Dan is omitted but perhaps reappears in 21:12. Does this mean that some will be saved as by firebrands plucked from it by the grace of God?

16. The Joyous Service of the White-robed Throng.

Revelation 7:11-17. No nation has a monopoly of saints. No tribe is unrepresented. No language is so

rude that its children may not learn the speech of heaven. The theology of heaven attributes salvation to God as its source through Jesus as its medium. Palm branches symbolize victory and the white robes, transfiguring purity. "His raiment became white and dazzling," Luke 9: 29, R. V. Thus it was spoken of the transfigured Christ. Notice that sevenfold doxology! The visions of the saved shall awaken new joy in the angelic hosts, but how much more in the heart of Christ!

When we stand face to face with an inexplicable mystery, how comforting it is to be able to say in perfect faith, *Thou knowest!* Tribulation, whether it stands for our private afflictions or for some great crisis of martyrdom, is left behind forever. It should never be forgotten, however, that we are not saved by *our* sufferings but by *His*. The blessedness of heaven consists in the unveiled presence of God, in unbroken service, and in safety because God will spread his tabernacle over us. This exquisite description of the future life consists largely of negatives, because the positive defies human speech. No scorching trial, no fear, no want, no finality, because the Lamb will conduct our eternal progress deeper and deeper into heaven.

17. The Incense of the Prayers of Saints.

Revelation 8: 1-13. The seventh seal includes the seven trumpets. What a contrast that pause must have been to the jubilant songs of the great multitude! In the Jewish temple, we are told, the musical instruments and chanting resounded during the offering of the sacrifices, which occupied the first part of the service; but at the offering of the incense a solemn silence was observed, Ps. 62: 1. The people prayed quietly without, at the time of incense. What a glimpse is here afforded of the intercession of our great High Priest! The smoke of the incense of his great merit arises with the prayers of the saints. Pray on, believer, though your voice be feeble, and so much imperfection mingles with

your efforts to serve God. The incense of Christ's intercession is fragrant enough to make even you acceptable.

The four first trumpets include the devastation of natural objects. The dumb creation, and even the earth itself, suffers for man's sin. Think of the horses wounded in battle, dying in long agony; of vast tracks of country once smiling, with harvest becoming a wilderness; of the soil compelled to produce the ingredients of poisoning and intoxication. Poor Mother Earth! Goethe said that he could hear her sighing as a captive for redemption.

18. "Out of the Smoke of the Pit."

Revelation 9:1-11. This chapter reminds us of the prophet Joel who, under the imagery of a swarm of locusts, depicted the coming invasion of hostile nations. Whether these warriors are intended for barbarian hordes which swept over the Roman Empire previous to its fall, or whether they represent the Saracens, between whose appearance and the details of this vision there is much in common, is not within our province to determine. The point which specially concerns us is that only those escaped who had received the imprint of God's seal. Of old the destroying angel passed over the houses, on the lintels of which the blood was visible.

But there are spiritual foes, against whose invasion we must seek the sealing of God's Spirit. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption," Eph. 4:30. What is impressed with the royal seal is under special protection; and when temptation assails you, you may assuredly claim that divine protection, which shall surround you as an impenetrable shield. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them," Ps. 34:7. We fight not against flesh and blood, but against wicked spirits in heavenly places, and only the spiritual can secure for us immunity against the spiritual.

19. Impenitent in Spite of All.

Revelation 9:12-21. The river *Euphrates* possibly stands for nations and hordes of men emanating from that region; and these verses are held by a large number of expositors to foretell the invasion of Europe by the Turks, who have desolated and held the sacred places of the Jewish faith. The Church of that time was eaten through with idolatry. Image worship had become almost universal, and the invariable consequence of this relapse from the noble spiritual ideals of the Jewish and Christian dispensations was materialism, sensuality, and the greed of the priest. On the other hand, the Turks were fierce iconoclasts, and their progress everywhere was marked by the demolition of Christian emblems.

Demons contrive to get themselves worshiped under the effigies of idolatry; and murders, sorceries, fornication, and theft infest their temples. There is perpetual controversy between the spirit of truth and these perversities; and this conflict must continue, not only in the Church, but in the heart, until everything that opposes the reign of the Spirit is overthrown, and every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10:5. Is this supremacy of the Spirit secured for thee, my reader?

20. The Angel with the Little Book.

Revelation 10:1-11. If one of God's angels is so strong and glorious, what must the *Lord* of angels be! From the splendor of his retinue, we may estimate the wealth of the Prince. How exactly does this description of the little book suit the word of the Cross, that is, the message of the gospel! Things are spoken to the saints, which, as Paul says, no tongue can utter. They are sealed to the unbelieving but opened to the children of God. Notice that magnificent description of the ever-living God, the Creator, the Unfolder of the mystery of his dealings, vs. 6, 7. See also 1 Cor. 2:12.

The gospel is full of sweetness and delight in its first conception. The sense of peace with God, the consciousness of pardoned sin and acceptance in the beloved, are like the music of heaven or the dew of paradise. But the cross cuts deep into the self-life, as we carry the sentence of death in ourselves. We learn the necessity of being crucified with Christ, if we would enter into his resurrection joys; and so the Word of God, which is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrates lower and lower, dividing soul and spirit, the joints and marrow. Our Lord never concealed this from those who sought to be enrolled as his followers; but there is blessedness in the bitterness, as springs of fresh water arising amid the brine of the sea.

21. The "Two Witnesses."

Revelation 11:1-13. We cannot in this brief note indicate the various interpretations of this chapter, but certain great principles underlie it, which are true of every age.

(1) During the darkest ages, men have been raised up to testify against the prevailing corruption of their time, and especially the corruption of the apostate Church. Their opponents have endeavored to silence their voice and blacken their character, but God has ever vindicated them and given life out of death. (2) Always when the enemies of the truth have deemed themselves triumphant, there has been a rekindling of gospel testimony. A few years before Luther appeared, a medal was struck to commemorate the extinction of so-called heresy. (3) Such witness-bearing as is suggested by the comparison with Zechariah's vision, is fed from the heart of Christ. He is the root of the martyr line; his Spirit is the life-breath of his witnesses. All through the centuries, commonly called Christian, though generally very un-Christian, there has been an unbroken succession of pure and noble souls who have stood for Jesus Christ even unto death. Let us dare to stand with them and our Lord, that he may not be ashamed of us at his coming.

22. "He Shall Reign For Ever and Ever."

Revelation 11:14—12:6. The kingdom is even now Christ's, but it is hidden, even as he is. One day it will be manifested. For a long time David was the anointed king of Israel, but Saul sat on the throne until the predestined hour came when the tribes of Israel made David their chosen monarch. This surely is a type of that which will one day become apparent to the whole creation. The kingdom of the world will wholly and permanently become Christ's. Suffering and sorrow will then flee away, as birds of ill omen at dawn. War will cease to the end of the world. The glad populations of mankind will walk in the light of life, and the long night and travail of nature will be ended. It may be that each great era of human history ends with a scene of judgment; or that these series of visions are concurrent, viewing the earth-order from different standpoints.

What comfort is derived from this vision of the Ark of God's Covenant, which abides in the inner sanctuary! He is true to us. His word cannot alter, neither will he recede from his pledge to overthrow our enemies, to undo the devastation they have caused, and to realize his original purpose in man's creation.

23. Satan Cast Down from Heaven.

Revelation 12:7-17. The spirit of evil waits to destroy each birth of good in our world. As soon as Mary had given birth to our Lord, Herod sought to destroy him, and this is characteristic of all the ages. But God's care is always at hand to deliver his own. He has his prepared places, where he hides those who trust in him. He keeps them in the secret of his pavilion from the strife of men.

Sin has brought conflict, not on our earth only, but throughout the universe; but from the heavenly places it has been driven, and the last stand is made on our earth. Is it not possible that the awful war which has desolated

mankind may be one of the last phases of this age-long conflict? There is but one talisman of victory. We overcome only in so far as we take shelter in the blood of the Lamb and wield as our weapon the Word of God. As darkness cannot resist the light, so evil cannot exist before the witness of the Church and the child of God, if only we care more for the honor and glory of Christ than for our own lives. To the end there must be war between the seed of the woman and the dragon, and there must be bruising. But the final outcome is sure. As Satan was cast out of heaven, so he shall be cast out of earth, and Christ shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.

24. The Beast and His Worshipers.

Revelation 13:1-18. The horns symbolize power; the heads, intelligence; and the beast, an earthly kingdom. The dragon must stand for Satan, who has wrought his greatest achievements through earthly potentates and systems. It is through the world-power that the spleen and hatred of hell have been vented on the saints. What a comfort to know that the duration of such power is limited to 42 symbolic months, that is, 1,260 days (or years). If you are enduring hatred and persecution, be of good cheer, for your name is written in the Lamb's book of life, v. 8. This may well compensate us amid the most violent opposition.

The beast arising from the earth, vs. 11-18, may represent the persecutions of papal Rome as contrasted with those of pagan Rome in the previous verses. Or this symbol may represent some of those modern devices by which men's hearts are turned from God, such as the new semi-religious schools of thought that strive for the empire of men's minds, or the customs of modern trade, v. 17. Be these as they may, the one outstanding lesson for us all is that the child of God is always in collision with the spirit of his age.

25. The Lamb's Chosen Worshipers.

Revelation 14:1-8. The blessed ones with whom this chapter opens are only the first-fruit sheaf from the great harvest field. Think of it! If one sheaf consists of 144,000, what will be the entire number of the saved? The characteristics attributed to them may be realized by us all now and here. We must bear the name, that is, the nature and character of Jesus, in our faces; we must be pure in heart and life; and we must go wherever he goes. If to Gethsemane, we must follow him; if to Calvary, we must take up our cross and go thither; if to Heaven, we shall be with him there also. It is thought by some that this first-fruit sheaf represents the dear children who have died in early life and have become the Saviour's body-guard and close associates. It may be so, but more likely it stands for the possessors of the child-heart.

In majestic procession, one after another, strong angels are seen issuing from the heavenly portals, with their sublime announcements. Notice the phrase, *the everlasting gospel*, v. 6. In other words, the gospel of the grace of God is no expedient brought in to patch up a program which has been seriously spoiled; it is as old as eternity and brings to men eternal joy, and peace, and hope.

26. The Winepress of God's Wrath.

Revelation 14:9-20. We cannot understand the torment of those who are depicted in vs. 9-12, except it be the remorse at having refused the love of the Lamb of God. Even Christ himself cannot save a soul from its self-condemnation. Note the emphasis of v. 13. The voice which pronounces the blessedness of the departed is *from heaven*. The emphasis is on the word *henceforth*. There is no pause in their onward progress, no dim and shadowy existence, no cessation in thought. *From henceforth*, that is, from the moment of death, they are blessed who die in the Lord; and this announcement is endorsed by the emphatic *Yea* of the Spirit.

It is a great matter to have that affirmation to our words, whether we preach or teach. What could better authenticate them than that deep co-witness to God's Word in the heart or in the Church? See Acts 5:32 and Heb. 2:4.

This harvest scene surely stands for the blessed revivals which have from time to time visited the world, and may especially be reckoned on in the last days of the present dispensation. Only when the harvest is gathered in will the vintage of woe and wrath commence. To which ingathering do *we* belong?

27. The Song of Moses and of the Lamb.

Revelation 15:1-8. The imagery in the magnificent scene with which this chapter opens is perhaps borrowed from Pharaoh's overthrow in the Red Sea, which, as the rich lines of an Eastern dawn illuminated its waters, seemed like a sea of glass mingled with fire. So, beside the crystal sea of Time, from whose surface all traces of storm will have been removed and on which the eternal morning will be breaking, we, who by grace have overcome, shall celebrate the final victory of God. We shall sing an anthem in which the Hebrew and the Christian, the children of the old dispensation and of the new, the souls who have seen through a glass darkly and those who have beheld face to face, shall rejoice together.

One day we shall see the rightfulness of all that God has done, v. 4. All his ways are just and true, whether our poor human sense detects this or not. Let us dare to affirm it even now. Ponder that great name—*King of the ages*, v. 3, R.V. He only is holy; we need the perfect cleansing and righteousness which he gives us, that we may dare to stand in his presence. From this radiant vision, we turn sadly to the fate of the godless, Christ-rejecting world. See vs. 5-8.

28. Recompense for the Blood of Saints.

Revelation 16:1-9. It makes us pause to hear that angels, who rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, are

employed in these terrible judgments. It is very startling to hear their outspoken acquiescence in the plagues that vitiate the earth, sea, springs, and sun. The angel of the waters insists that God has judged righteously, and the altar, beneath which are the souls of the martyrs, assents.

Our softer age shrinks from such conceptions of the divine judgments, but it is likely that our standards are weakened and warped by our daily contact with what is earthly and human. God's love is not soft and emasculated, but strong, vigorous, and righteous. Only when we reach the land of light and glory, shall we understand the true horror of sin and the inveteracy of human apostasy. Then we also shall be able to take up those solemn words of endorsement in v. 7, *Even so, Lord God, Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.*

29. "The War of the Great Day of God."

Revelation 16:10-21. All these judgments apparently refer to the destruction of those great systems of falsehood and apostasy which set themselves against the truth and purity of God. The dragon, beast, and false prophet are the devil's mimicry of the divine Trinity. The dragon corresponds to God the Father in delegating his authority; the beast, like our Lord, is crowned with diadems, Rev. 13:1; 19:12; the false prophet directs attention to the beast, as does the Holy Spirit to Christ.

The mystery of iniquity will make one last effort to obtain the empire of the world, seeking to effect its purpose through a human confederacy. When that confederacy has reached its climax of effrontery, the coming of the Son of God is near; hence the need for watchfulness and purity, v. 15. Armageddon is the mountain of Megiddo, in the plain of Esdraelon. See Joel 3:2, 12, 14; also Zechariah 12:11. The great city symbolizes the apostate Church, or professing Christendom. The true Bride is away from these judgments, awaiting the manifestation of her Lord.

30. The Great World City Overthrown.

Revelation 17:1-18. This scarlet-attired woman is that miserable attempt made in every age to counterfeit the true Church of the living God. Man does not like the religion of the cross, of faith, of self-denial, and each age has witnessed some false system from which all these objectionable elements are eliminated. Surely a meretricious system has revealed itself successively in Babylon, Jerusalem, Rome, London, New York, and other great centers. Fashion smiles on it, wealth bedizens it, human power unites with it, and in every age it has been drunken with the blood of martyrs.

Between this miserable travesty of the Church and the Church herself there has been perpetual conflict. But the ultimate victory has always remained with the Lamb, and if only we side with him, as the called, chosen, and faithful of v. 14, we also shall be more than conquerors. Human prestige and power shall not ultimately avail in the conflict against the all-conquering Saviour. And finally the very world-powers shall turn against the apostate and adulterous Church, v. 16. Come out from her and be separate!

31. "Her Sins Have Reached unto Heaven."

Revelation 18:1-13. We have seen that the scarlet woman represents the false religion of human wit and fashion. It is found in every age. There is not a city, town, or village where it does not seek to allure men from Christ. The mischief is that so many really godly people are misled by it. In this they resemble Obadiah, who hid the prophets in a cave and fed them but was hand and glove with Ahab. To all such, who are endeavoring to keep in touch with the true Bride and with the apostate Church, the summons of v. 4 has a very profound significance.

It was the unanimous verdict of the reformers that the great city here described, v. 10, was intended to represent Rome, as the seat of the great apostasy. If that be

the case, the merchandise described here does not refer to literal commerce, but to the carnal delights which are often permitted and fostered by false religious systems to win the adhesion of the worldly and unclean.

32. Fallen Like a Stone into the Sea.

Revelation 18:14-24. This section delineates the utter desolation which will ensue when the judgments of God have finished their mission against professing but unfaithful Christendom. How near we are at the present hour to their fulfilment, we dare not say. But it often seems as if we are living in the last days of "the times of the Gentiles," and very near the fulfilment of all that is written in this book. It is the universal comment that all religious values are being altered. The church systems, as such, give signs that they are losing their hold on the vast masses of the people, while the heart of man cries out as eagerly as ever for the living God. We can only heed the Lord's command to watch, and see to it that we may be found of him in peace, and standing patiently at our post. In the meantime events in the distant East are symptomatic of the fig tree putting forth her leaves. See Matt. 24:32.

33. The Fourfold Hallelujah.

Revelation 19:1-10. One day we shall hear those four *Alleluias*, vs. 1, 3, 4, 6. They will reverberate to the farthest limits of the universe. They will not be inspired by vindictiveness or revenge, but will be jubilant with the conviction that God has vindicated himself and has proved that right can conquer wrong; truth, falsehood; and love, hate. One of our chief anticipations when we think of the future, is that God's character and government of the universe will be amply vindicated.

Contemporaneous with the fall of Babylon will be the marriage of the Lamb. Before he assumes, together with his saints, the task of governing the world, the union of supreme love will have been consummated, and the

marriage supper will have been filled with guests. Note from v. 10 that the angels are our fellow-servants. They hail us as comrades on the condition that we never flinch from maintaining the testimony of Jesus.

34. "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords."

Revelation 19:11-21. A sublime vision of Christ, as he comes to judge the beast, that is, the world-power, which has ever been in antagonism to the principles of his Kingdom. We must distinguish between it and the final judgment. *This* precedes, *that* follows, the millennial reign. Compare Matt. 24:27, 29, 37, 39. The blood in which his vesture is dipped is not his own, but that of his foes. See Isa. 63:2. Here at last is fulfilled Ps. 2:9.

Notice the attributes of Christ: He is *Faithful*, because he will stand by us to the end. He is *True*, never doing less but always more than he has promised. *Pure* as flame. He is also in *many* realms; and the *Word of God*, that is, the final utterance and complete revelation of the Most High. Let us follow him! But if we do, we must resemble him. His robes are naturally white, but we must wash ours, that we may have the right to the tree of life and to enter the city of God. Compare Ps. 110. This will be the time, also, to which our Lord referred in Matt. 13:41. God's whirlwind will scatter the chaff.

35. The Millennial Reign.

Revelation 20:1-6. In the preceding chapter the beast and the false prophet are depicted as meeting their punishment in the lake of fire. In this, the devil, death, and Hades are consigned to a similar fate. The imagery is apparently drawn from that fearful tragedy which left so deep an impression on the ancient world. See Gen. 14:10; 19:24; Jude 7. The last reference is especially interesting, because there the fate of the cities of the plain is quoted as an example of eternal fire. May it be ours to participate in the *first* resurrec-



THE RIDER ON THE WHITE HORSE. Revelation 19: 11-13.

From Painting by GEORGE F. WATTS, Modern British Artist.

tion! Let our loins be girded and our lamps trimmed, that we may be found of Christ in peace, at our posts, and prepare to enter with him into the bridal feast. This is a more solemn and critical consideration than the majority of Christians seem to suppose. In fellowship with their Lord, his people are to exert in a godly direction the same kind of influence over the affairs of men, as the rulers of darkness in an *ungodly* sense now exercise. Thank God, every morning brings that blessed day nearer.

36. Before the Great White Throne.

Revelation 20:7-15. Gog and Magog take us back to Gen. 10:2; see also Ezek. 38 and 39. It would seem that this great confederacy of the northern nations against the beloved city, Jerusalem, will be led by Satan, and overwhelmed once and for all by the direct judgment of God.

The final judgment is depicted in vs. 11-15. God's people will not appear at that bar. All the human family will be arraigned, save those whose names are in the book of life, John 5:24. See Exod. 32:32; Dan. 12:1; Phil. 4:3; and Rev. 21:27. Death and Hades will surrender their contents. What a marvelous audience! The throne is *great*, because of the destiny to be decided; and *white*, because of the immaculate purity of the Judge, who will be none other than our Lord. See John 5:22; Acts 17:31. The books will surely include conscience; Rom. 2:15, 16; God's Word, John 12:48; and the tablets of memory, Luke 16:25.

37. "A New Heaven and a New Earth."

Revelation 21:1-8. Here is a vision of the new creation. This is the "restitution of all things" to which Peter refers in Acts 3:21, and the deliverance of creation from the bondage of corruption which Paul anticipates in Rom. 8:21. No words can portray in *positive* description what that universe will be, and even the inspired writer has to confine himself to *negatives*. All

he does is to name various elements of terror and dread, saying: This shall not be there, nor that, nor the other, all of which are the fell brood of human sin. The one great positive blessing will be that which was given to Israel in type, but then will be the perpetual experience of the human family. Compare v. 3 and Exod. 25:8. Let us see to it that here and now the Lord Jesus is *the* Alpha and Omega, *the* A and Z of our life. If so, we may even in this mortal life begin to experience the life of the redeemed. We may now inherit all these things, and know the intimacy of v. 7. But we must *overcome*. Note that the *fearful*, that is, the cowardly, who draw back in the face of opposition, are classed with the abominable and murderers.

38. "The Holy City."

Revelation 21:9-27. The "new Jerusalem" is the redeemed Church united with her Lord in the act of governing the whole world. A city is obviously the seat of imperial rule. In that blessed condition the saints will rule the earth as the powers of darkness rule it now. We shall enjoy the fellowship of the good and great of every age. In a literal sense we shall be fellow-citizens with the saints. All ages and dispensations will blend there. Angels at the gates; the names of the twelve tribes and twelve Apostles engraved in imperishable characters to indicate the blending of the dispensations; the differing stones, representing variety of character and function but all blending in the light of the Lamb on the throne.

The happy throngs pour through the gates with never-ending rapture. Those gates, facing every quarter, stand always open; but none desire to go forth, except commissioned on some errand by the King. All the glory and honor of the world are gathered within those walls, because Jesus will be king over every department of human life. There will be room for all beauty, art, and culture in the city of eternal light and love.

39. "The River of Water of Life."

Revelation 22:1-9. The first five verses of this chapter obviously belong to the preceding one, from which they should not be severed. The ever-flowing river of life proves that the whole life of the blessed depends on the life of God, resident in the enthroned Lamb and communicated through the Holy Spirit. In Eden there was one tree of life; in the New Jerusalem there is a grove with perennial fruit, not protected by a flaming sword, but standing freely in the main thoroughfare, that all who will may take. Observe the threefold description of the saints—they serve, they behold, and they resemble vs. 3, 4. No night with its shadow; no rest is needed in the delightful service; no artificial, but underrived and original light; no cessation of regnant power, for they shall reign for ever and ever.

When the visions end, John is assured of the reality and truth of all that he has heard and seen. It appears that the Master himself broke in with the assurance of his speedy advent; and who shall say that that assurance has failed, when we measure the flight of time with the years of the right hand of the Most High? We should remember also that the fall of Jerusalem and the sack of Jerusalem marked stages in the Advent.

40. "Come, Lord Jesus."

Revelation 22:10-21. Still, four times repeated, implies the crystallization and permanence of character. The rewards mentioned here are for the faithful service of Christ's stewards, as in Matt. 25:21. For the fourth time, he who began the book and closes it, uses of himself the divine monogram of Alpha and Omega, Rev. 1:8, 11; 21:6. In the Authorized Version the way to the tree of life was opened to those who kept the commandments, but it is very comforting to read in the Revised Version that this blessed privilege is for those "who wash their robes." Notice the combination of various titles in Christ: David's Lord and David's Son; the Morning Star and the Sun of Heaven's Day; the Com-

ing One, for whose quick return the whole creation waits; and the Water of Life, of which whosoever will may drink. The appeal of v. 17 is to our Lord, asking him to make haste to come, and it is answered in v. 20. But who shall tell whether that cry may not, sooner than we think, be answered by a spiritual transformation of the things seen and temporal, so that without a break, in the twinkling of an eye, the veil of matter may be rent, and the whole imminent glory of the unseen and eternal swim into view! Let us be on the alert!

(For Review Questions see next page.)

REVIEW QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION

OUTLINE.

- (a) By what title may the book be described?
- (b) What are its main divisions?
- (c) How are these divisions related to each other?

INTRODUCTION.

- (d) By whom was this book written? In what circumstances?
- (e) What is its value to believers today?

SECTIONS 1-40. CHAPTERS 1-22.

(Each question applies to the paragraph of corresponding number in the Comments.)

1. What do the seven churches represent?
2. What is Jesus' favorite assurance?
3. What is the structure of each of the letters to the churches?
4. With what disciple of John may we connect the promises of the epistle to Smyrna?
5. Why was the church warned against the Nicolaitans?
6. Why did Thyatira need the counsel, "Hold fast till I come"?
7. For what was Sardis condemned and what was the message to her?
8. What assurance of opportunity was given to a church of "little power"?
9. Why is lukewarmness more censured than coldness?
What is the promise if we open the door when he knocks?
10. What does the vision of "the throne set in heaven" mean?
11. How may we interpret the seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb?
12. Why was the Lamb declared worthy to open the book?
13. What do the riders on the four horses signify?
14. What striking command was given to the martyrs of the faith?

15. What was the song of the multitude before the throne?
16. How is the blessedness of those "in white robes" described?
17. What followed the opening of the seventh seal?
18. What is our protection against spiritual foes?
19. What may be meant by "the river Euphrates"?
20. What promise was given by the angel with the little book?
21. How do the two witnesses suggest the history of reform in the Church?
22. How does the reign of David illustrate that of Christ?
23. How extensive is the conflict between the forces of good and evil?
24. What power is represented by the beast and who were his worshippers?
25. What assurance may we find in the words "everlasting gospel"?
26. What is the promise for those who die in the Lord?
27. What is suggested by "the sea of glass"?
28. How can God's severity be reconciled with his goodness?
29. What warning is uttered about the coming of "the great day of God"?
30. Who is the scarlet woman and what is her fate?
31. What great city is denoted by the name Babylon?
32. How is her desolation to be interpreted?
33. What is said of "the marriage of the Lamb"?
34. What attributes are ascribed to Jesus in the vision of the white horse?
35. What is meant by the millennial reign of Jesus?
36. How is the final judgment described?
37. What was declared by him "that sitteth on the throne"?
38. What are some of the glories of the new Jerusalem?
39. What is said of the tree of life?
40. What is the final invitation of the book of Revelation?

